



The Apostle Paul, Servant of Christ

Overview Study Guide Unit II, Chapter 6 "The Second Missionary Journey"

by Lorin L Cranford



Boiling Springs, NC
704 966-6845
clv@cranfordville.com
© All rights reserved

Quick Links to Study

6.1.0 The Second Journey	6.1.3 Ministry in Macedonia	6.1.4 Ministry in Achaia	6.1.5 Return to Antioch
6.1.1 Ministry in Syria and Cilicia	6.1.3.1 Work in Philippi	6.1.4.1 Work in Athens	Conclusion
6.1.2 Ministry in Galatia and Mysia	6.1.3.2 Work in Thessalonica	6.1.4.2 Work in Corinth	
	6.1.3.3 Work in Berea		

Introduction

Once the conference in Jerusalem was concluded, Paul and Barnabas made the long journey back north to Antioch in Syria. Judas and Silas from the Jerusalem church went with them in order to officially deliver the letter from Jerusalem to the church in Antioch. Although unnamed, other members of the Antioch church who had traveled with Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem (cf. 15:2) are presumed to have also returned back to Antioch after the conference in Jerusalem. Acts 15:30 simply indicates regarding this group of men that "Οἱ μὲν οὖν ἀπολυθέντες κατήλθον εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν, [therefore these having been sent off went down to Antioch](#). What a discussion must have taken place among these six or more men as they made the several day journey back to Antioch. The church joyously received the news about the position regarding Gentiles that was taken in Jerusalem (cf. 15:30-35). Both Judas and Silas enthusiastically encouraged the church to continue its ministry as it had been doing (v. 32).

After the passing of some time Silas and Judas decided to return home to Jerusalem, but Paul and Barnabas had found a new spiritual home in Antioch and thus they remained in the city to help the church (vv. 33-35). How much time passed is not specified by Luke in Acts. Neither does he include the disruption that happened with who Peter made a visit to the city after Silas and Judas had left for Jerusalem. But this is not surprising since Luke's objective in his writing was to stress unity and harmony between the emerging Gentile Christianity and the Jewish oriented Christianity. Paul included it (Gal. 2:11-14) simply because it fit his writing purposes of stressing the independency of his apostleship from control by the Twelve in Jerusalem.

The next major event in Paul's life would get off to a bad start in a conflict with his dear friend Barnabas over John Mark. But Paul had much yet to learn about missionary service. This second trip would indeed be blessed by God and commissioned by the church at Antioch. But it would take twists and turns completely unexpected by Paul. He would venture much further from his homes in Tarsus and Jerusalem than he had ever been before. He would encounter Greek culture first hand as he traveled in Macedonia and Achaia preaching the Gospel. The moral rottenness of Greek society by this point in time would confront him with new challenges he had not had to deal with in the eastern Mediterranean where Greek culture was influential but was not native to the local cultures. God was again pushing the apostle outside his comfort zones into new situations of ministry that demanded total dependence on divine leadership for their success.

6.1.0 The second missionary journey (ca. AD 48-51), Acts 15:36-18:22

Acts 15:36-39. [36 After some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Come, let us return and visit the believers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." 37 Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. 38 But Paul decided not to take with them one who had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not accompanied them in the work. 39 The disagreement became so sharp that they parted company; Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus.](#)

36 Μετὰ δὲ τινὰς ἡμέρας εἶπεν πρὸς Βαρναβᾶν Παῦλος· ἐπιστρέψαντες δὴ ἐπισκεψώμεθα τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς κατὰ πόλιν πᾶσαν ἐν αἷς κατηγγείλαμεν τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου πῶς ἔχουσιν. 37 Βαρναβᾶς δὲ ἐβούλετο συμπαραλαβεῖν καὶ τὸν Ἰωάννην τὸν καλούμενον Μάρκον· 38 Παῦλος δὲ ἤξιου, τὸν ἀποστάντα ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἀπὸ Παμφυλίας καὶ μὴ

συνελθόντα αὐτοῖς εἰς τὸ ἔργον μὴ συμπαραλαμβάνειν τοῦτον. 39 ἐγένετο δὲ παροξυσμὸς ὥστε ἀποχωρισθῆναι αὐτοὺς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων, τὸν τε Βαρναβάν παραλαβόντα τὸν Μάρκον ἐκπλεῦσαι εἰς Κύπρον,

After the passing of some time (Μετὰ δέ τινες ἡμέρας) in their busy ministry in Antioch, the discussion turned to the churches established on the first missionary journey in southern Galatia. Quite naturally Paul and Barnabas were concerned about the welfare of these congregations. Although Antioch was located on one of the major Roman roads that connected to those running east and west across the region where these churches were, private communication between these missionaries and those congregations was very difficult. From Luke's description in v. 36, they evidently had not heard anything from these churches where they had been two to three years earlier, and perhaps even longer than that. Thus their concern about the welfare of those congregations is easily understandable.

Thus Paul proposed to Barnabas, ἐπιστρέψαντες δὴ ἐπισκεψώμεθα τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς κατὰ πόλιν πᾶσαν ἐν αἷς κατηγγείλαμεν τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου πῶς ἔχουσιν, “Come, let us return and visit the brothers in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord and see how they are doing.” The heart of Paul's proposal was simply ἐπισκεψώμεθα τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς... πῶς ἔχουσιν, let us see after the brothers, how they are doing. The first part is pastoral and is taken from the verb ἐπισκέπτομαι meaning to see after in the sense to take care of. The second grows out of the first. The phrase πῶς ἔχουσιν, posted at the end of the second and after the relative clause, has the literal sense of saying, how they are holding on to the Word of the Lord. The spiritual welfare of these churches was tied into how faithfully they were adhering to the Gospel message Paul and Barnabas had proclaimed to them in that initial evangelizing and subsequent training on the first missionary trip. Since all of this had been given in oral form rather than in written form, it was even more urgent for these missionaries to pay another visit.

Barnabas was keen on the idea of re-visiting these churches, but he had another idea that Paul did not think was so keen: he wanted to take John Mark with them, again: Βαρναβᾶς δὲ ἐβούλετο συμπαραλαβεῖν καὶ τὸν Ἰωάννην τὸν καλούμενον Μάρκον, Barnabas wanted to take with them John called Mark. The translation of ἐβούλετο is better rendered as ‘was determined to.’ This was more than a suggestion by Barnabas to Paul; it was close to a demand. Mark was a nephew of Barnabas, and had accompanied them to Cyprus on the first missionary journey as an assistant: εἶχον δὲ καὶ Ἰωάννην ὑπηρέτην (Acts 13:5b). But at the mainland port city of Perga, John Mark left them to return home to Jerusalem: Ἰωάννης δὲ ἀποχωρήσας ἀπ' αὐτῶν ὑπέστρεψεν εἰς Ἱεροσόλυμα (Acts 13:13b).

Paul did not think¹ that he had justifiable reason to leave the two older missionaries: Παῦλος δὲ ἤξίου, τὸν ἀποστάντα ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἀπὸ Παμφυλίας καὶ μὴ συνελθόντα αὐτοῖς εἰς τὸ ἔργον μὴ συμπαραλαμβάνειν τοῦτον, But Paul decided not to take with them one who had deserted them in Pamphylia² and had not accompanied them in the work. This was an impasse between these two men, that is understandable. Both had arguments for their views. Paul did not want to risk another failure for such an important mission, while Barnabas wanted to give his nephew a second chance.



¹“Whereas the Alexandrian text reads *ēxiou*, ‘he (Paul) was considering it fitting,’ MS D reads rather *ouk ebouletō legōn*, ‘he (Paul) did not want to, saying (that).’ MS D also adds (at the end) *eis hō epemphthēsan*, ‘for (that for) which they had been sent.’” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 572.]

²No contradiction between Acts 15:5b and 15:38 over location: Perga was a city in the district of Pamphylia, as the above map indicates.

What would be interesting to know is why Mark left the group at Perga. Luke only indicates that he did leave them, although he characterizes Paul's perspective in 15:38 as Mark being τὸν ἀποστάντα ἀπ' αὐτῶν, *who had deserted them*.³ The participle ἀποστάντα used by Luke comes from ἀφίστημι with the basic meaning of 'go away' or 'withdraw.' The more negative translations such as 'deserted,' 'withdrew,' 'a quitter,' are based on the double preposition construction ἀποστάντα ἀπ' αὐτῶν where the use of ἀπό τιος with the verb ἀφίστημι carries this negative characterization of literally 'putting oneself away from someone.'⁴ Similar uses in Heb. 3:12 and 1 Tim. 4:1 refer to apostasy though this construction. Whatever it was behind Mark's motivation, Paul considered his withdrawal from the group at Perga to be inexcusable and a signal of a lack of trustworthiness.⁵

Luke indicates that both missionaries refused to budge from their positions, and the only solution was for them to go their separate ways: 39 ἐγένετο δὲ παροξυσμὸς ὥστε ἀποχωρισθῆναι αὐτοὺς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων, τὸν τε Βαρναβᾶν παραλαβόντα τὸν Μᾶρκον ἐκπλεῦσαι εἰς Κύπρον, 40 Παῦλος δὲ ἐπιλεξάμενος Σιλᾶν ἐξήλθεν παραδοθεὶς τῇ χάριτι τοῦ κυρίου ὑπὸ τῶν ἀδελφῶν, 39 *The disagreement became so sharp that they parted company; Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus. 40 But Paul chose Silas and set out, the believers commending him to the grace of the Lord.* Luke makes it clear that a sharp disagreement arose between Paul and Barnabas over Mark.⁶ This is one of the sad moments in early church history. Because we possess so few details about

³Various tones in translations are given to τὸν ἀποστάντα ἀπ' αὐτῶν:

NRSV: who had deserted them; ESV: who had withdrawn from them; ESV: since he had deserted them; ASV: who withdrew from them; KJV: who departed from them; BBE: who had gone away from them; D-R: having departed from them; TEV: because he had not stayed with them to the end of their mission, but had turned back and left them; HCSB: who had deserted them; NASB: who had deserted them; LEB: who departed from them; NCV: he did not continue with them in the work; NIV: Mark had deserted them; NIV: because he had deserted them; NKJV: who had departed from them; RSV: who had withdrawn from them; Message: a quitter who, as soon as the going got tough, had jumped ship on them; TNIV: because he had deserted them; Wey: who had deserted them; Wycliffe: he that departed from them.

⁴“ἀποστάντα suggests (as ἀποχωρήσας in 13:13. does not) the blameworthiness of Mark's departure (cf. e.g. Xenophon, *Anabasis* 2.5:7, εἰς ἐχυρὸν χωρίον ἀποσταίη, to withdraw from battle), and this is borne out by the following words: John Mark failed to accompany Paul and Barnabas εἰς τὸ ἔργον, that is, the work of evangelizing the interior of Asia Minor. This showed that he was not to be trusted, and Paul accordingly thought it right μὴ συμπαραλαμβάνειν (cf. v. 37) τοῦτον, the pronoun taking up τὸν ἀποστάντα ... καὶ μὴ συνελθόντα.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 755.]

⁵In the fictional *Acts of Barnabas*, a fifth century AD document describing a supposed ministry of Barnabas through the eyes of John Mark presents a very different version of what happened:

And when it came to pass that they finished teaching in Antioch, on the first of the week they took counsel together to set out for the places of the East, and after that to go into Cyprus, and oversee all the churches in which they had spoken the word of God. And Barnabas entreated Paul to go first to Cyprus, and oversee his own in his village; and Lucius(3) entreated him to take the oversight of his city Cyrene. And a vision was seen by Paul in sleep, that he should hasten to Jerusalem, because the brethren expected him there. But Barnabas urged that they should go to Cyprus, and pass the winter, and then that they should go to Jerusalem at the feast. Great contention, therefore, arose between them.(4) And Barnabas urged me also to accompany them, on account of my being their servant from the beginning, and on account of my having served them in all Cyprus until they came to Perga of Pamphylia; and I there had remained many days. But Paul cried out against Barnabas, saying: It is impossible for him to go with us. And those who were with us there urged me also to accompany them, because there was a vow upon me to follow them to the end. So that Paul said to Barnabas: If thou wilt take John who also is surnamed Mark with thee, go another road; for he shall not come with us. And Barnabas coming to himself, said: The grace of God does not desert(1) him who has once served the Gospel and journeyed with us. If, therefore, this be agreeable to thee, Father Paul, I take him and go. And he said: Go thou in the grace of Christ, and we in the power of the Spirit.

Therefore, bending their knees, they prayed to God. And Paul, groaning aloud, wept, and in like manner also Barnabas, saying to one another: It would have been good for us, as at first, so also at last, to work in common among men; but since it has thus seemed good to thee, Father Paul, pray for me that my labour may be made perfect to commendation: for thou knowest how I have served thee also to the grace of Christ that has been given to thee. For I go to Cyprus, and hasten to be made perfect;(2) for I know that I shall no more see thy face, O Father Paul. And failing on the ground at his feet, he wept long. And Paul said to him: The Lord stood by me also this night, saying, Do not force Barnabas not to go to Cyprus, for there it has been prepared for him to enlighten many; and do thou also, in the grace that has been given to thee, go to Jerusalem to worship in the holy place, and there it shall be shown thee where thy martyrdom has been prepared. And we saluted one another, and Barnabas took me to himself.

The story of this pseudepigraphical document written some four hundred years after Barnabas lived claims to tell the story of Barnabas' martyrdom on the island of Cyprus after he and Paul parted company at the beginning of the second missionary journey. It is interesting reading but does not contain any documented facts about the life of Barnabas apart from references to the Book of Acts in the New Testament.

⁶“The disagreement between Paul and Barnabas was sharp; exactly how sharp it is not easy to say. The only other occurrence of παροξυσμὸς in the NT has a good connotation: Christians are to provoke one another to love and good works (Heb. 10:24). It is

the situation regarding John Mark, we are at a loss to understand fully the dynamics going on that caused this split between Paul and Barnabas. One tends to wonder if the earlier episode with Peter at Antioch (Gal. 2:11-14) where Barnabas took sides with Peter against Paul may have played some role in their disagreement now. Whether Paul and Barnabas ever saw one another again is unknown. But we do learn that later on Paul and John Mark were able to patch up their differences and serve together, as Col. 4:10 makes clear: Ἀσπάζεται ὑμᾶς Ἀρίσταρχος ὁ συναιχμάλωτός μου *καὶ Μᾶρκος ὁ ἀνεψιὸς Βαρναβᾶ (περὶ οὗ ἐλάβετε ἐντολὰς, ἐὰν ἔλθῃ πρὸς ὑμᾶς, δέξασθε αὐτόν)*, Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, *as does Mark the nephew of Barnabas, concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him.*

Luke indicates that Barnabas took Mark and they set off for Cyprus to revisit the island: τὸν τε Βαρναβᾶν παραλαβόντα τὸν Μᾶρκον ἐκπλεῦσαι εἰς Κύπρον, *Barnabas took Mark with him and sailed away to Cyprus.* Unfortunately, Barnabas disappears from the Acts narrative at this point and we learn nothing else about him from Luke. He is mentioned later by Paul in 1 Cor. 9:6, implying that the church at Corinth knew about him, but nothing suggests that Barnabas ever visited the church. The important aspect of this reference is that Paul mentions him favorably just a couple of years after they had split company at Antioch. How successful this mission of Barnabas and Mark to Cyprus was is not known. Later church tradition is loaded with legends of all kinds of activities, but this material is fictional and does not present reliable information about the later ministry of Barnabas.⁷

Lessons. This unfortunate episode can teach us some valuable lessons. One thing that comes through clear is the brute honesty of Luke in including this event in his narrative. Some would argue that he had to in order to justify Silas going with Paul on the second missionary journey rather than Barnabas. But the truth is that this could have been presented in a ‘sugar coated’ manner along the same lines of the later *Acts of Barnabas* does. But Luke does not take that approach. He gives us a rather blunt account of what happened, even though our curiosity would like to have had more details. Luke, however, was not interested in satisfying modern curiosity. Instead, he gave us enough details to understand that these two missionaries parted company over the failure of an assistant traveling to this same region. Thus Silas takes Barnabas’ place as Paul’s fellow missionary.

Honest disagreement will inevitably surface between Christian leaders. Most of the time it is personality centered and not doctrinally centered.⁸ Resolving conflict properly and in a productive manner is not easy. This rupture of friendship between Paul and Barnabas evidently was not permanent, and clearly a later reconciliation between Paul and Mark speaks well for the integrity of both these men. We can only hope that something similar happened between Paul and Barnabas, and 1 Cor. 9:6 would seem to point that direction.

Another valuable insight from this reflects something that has happened repeatedly over the centuries. God has the amazing ability to make lemonade out of the lemons that we put on the table before Him. Out of this rupture came two missionary teams with the ability to cover double the territory in the same amount of time. The

possible however that this good use hints at a bad one: You are in fact provoking one another to anger; enough of this! ‘Provoke’ one another to something different. The cognate verb *παροξύνεσθαι* also has different connotations: at 1 Cor. 13:5 Paul says that love οὐ παροξύνεται; at Acts 17:16 it is said that Paul’s spirit *παροξύνετο ἐν αὐτῷ* at the sight of Athenian idolatry. Here it seems that relations between Paul and Barnabas were embittered; how far the bitterness was expressed in outbursts of anger is not clear. The result was clear; the partnership that is described in chs. 13 and 14 was broken and the two separated (*ἀποχωρισθῆναι*; in 13:13 John Mark separated, *ἀποχωρήσας*, from Paul and Barnabas) from each other. BDR § 391:2, n. 6 write, ‘In einem Satz wie Apg 15:39 ... würde ein Attiker wegen der mangelnden engen Verknüpfung und wegen des Gewichtes, das auf die eingetretene Folge fällt, eher den Ind. gesetzt haben.’ Haenchen (457) would also prefer the indicative. This probably states correctly the Attic distinction between infinitive and indicative (see M. 1:209f.), but Luke’s sentence leaves no doubt about the connection between the quarrel and the separation, and the importance of the result. No other cause is given for the separation (but see below), and Luke does nothing to suggest that the outcome of Paul’s future missions would have been different if he had been accompanied by Barnabas and Mark rather than by Silas and Timothy.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 755-56.]

⁷“Later Christian writers make legendary claims about Barnabas: e.g., that he preached in Rome during Jesus’ lifetime and introduced Clement of Rome to Christianity (Ps.-Clem. Recogn. 1.7–13), and that he was one of the seventy (Luke 10:1) sent out by Jesus (Clement of Alexandria Str. 2.20). The 5th- or 6th-century Acts of Barnabas purports to describe his later mission and martyrdom in Cyprus. Barnabas is also named as the author of some early Christian texts. Clement of Alexandria credits him as the author of the Epistle of Barnabas, a treatise which was included in some early biblical manuscripts, e.g., Sinaiticus. Some Western traditions regard Barnabas as the author of Hebrews, and he is also listed (in the *Decretum Gelasianum*) as the author of a gospel.” [Jon B. Daniels, “Barnabas (Person)” In vol. 1, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 611.]

⁸The tendency of a few commentators to speculate that the real issue of Mark was that he did not accept Paul’s stance about Gentile inclusion in the Gospel and the community of believers is pure fantasy, and a highly questionable extension of logic to the controversy described in Acts 15. Such an ‘argument from silence’ is questionable at best, and tends to reveal more about the commentator than about the text being interpreted.

Jerusalem church member Silas saw a missionary door open for him that changed his life forever. The assistant who first failed in missionary service, John Mark, was given a second opportunity to prove himself faithful and trustworthy. And from the later indication in Colossians he evidently did with flying colors. Ultimately the advancement of the Gospel was greater coming out of this conflict than it might possibly have been otherwise. Our God just has His ways of doing these kinds of things.

6.1.1 Ministry in Syria and Cilicia, Acts 15:40-41

Acts 15:40-41. 40 But Paul chose Silas and set out, the believers commending him to the grace of the Lord. 41 He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

40 Παῦλος δὲ ἐπιλεξάμενος Σιλᾶν ἐξῆλθεν παραδοθεὶς τῇ χάριτι τοῦ κυρίου ὑπὸ τῶν ἀδελφῶν. 41 διήρχετο δὲ τὴν Συρίαν καὶ [τὴν] Κιλικίαν ἐπιστηρίζων τὰς ἐκκλησίας,

The beginning of the second missionary journey is described in very brief terms by Luke in 15:40. Paul chose Silas to go with him and they left Antioch. Plus, their departure was with the blessing of the church at Antioch. Evidently this launching of the trip waited until after Barnabas and Mark had left for Cyprus.

The structure of the first sentence gets muddled in most English translations. The foundational statement of Luke is simply: Παῦλος δὲ... ἐξῆλθεν, and Paul departed. Luke wants to make it clear that once Barnabas left for Cyprus, taking John Mark, then Paul left Antioch for his trip. Despite their differences, their agreement was to divide up the territory of the first missionary trip into two segments: Cyprus and the mainland. Quite naturally Barnabas went back to Cyprus where he had grown up as a Jewish boy. Paul then traveled overland to visit the churches in southern Galatia on the mainland.



The first expansion element in the main clause is ἐπιλεξάμενος Σιλᾶν, *having chosen Silas*. Luke's single use of ἐπιλέγω (1 Aorist, middle, participle) here underscores that Paul literally "called Silas to himself," i.e., he chose Silas to accompany him on this trip. This does not imply that God was not involved in this selection process, as Luke clearly indicates about Paul and Barnabas for the first journey (cf. Acts 13:1-4). Silas brought many pluses to the table in missionary service with Paul:

a) Silas was a leader in the church at Jerusalem (15:22): Ἰούδαν τὸν καλούμενον Βαρσαββᾶν καὶ Σιλᾶν, ἄνδρας ἡγουμένους ἐν τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς, *Judas, called Barsabbas, and Silas, leaders among the brethren*.

b) He along with Judas were the official representatives of the Jerusalem church charged with the delivery of the letter from the Jerusalem leaders to the churches in and around Antioch (15:25): ἔδοξεν ἡμῖν γενομένοις ὁμοθυμαδὸν ἐκλεξαμένοις ἄνδρας πέμψαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς σὺν τοῖς ἀγαπητοῖς ἡμῶν Βαρναβᾶ καὶ Παύλῳ, *we have decided unanimously to choose representatives and send them to you, along with our beloved Barnabas and Paul*. Also 15:27, ἀπεστάλακαμεν οὖν Ἰούδαν καὶ Σιλᾶν καὶ αὐτοὺς διὰ λόγου ἀπαγγέλλοντας τὰ αὐτά, *We have therefore sent Judas and Silas, who themselves will tell you the same things by word of mouth*.

c) Silas was a Roman citizen along with Paul, and this would be important later on (Acts 16:37).

d) He was a prophet and appears to have been fluent in Greek (Acts 15:32, 22). This became the opportunity for him to serve as the amanuensis who did the writing of First Thessalonians (1:1), Second Thessalonians (1:1), and interestingly much later First Peter (5:12).

e) The name Σιλᾶς or Σίλας,⁹ *Silas*, with other possible spellings in the NT manuscript copies, is listed some twelve times only in Acts chapters fifteen through chapter eighteen. In both Paul's and Peter's writings, his more formal Latin name is used Σιλουανός¹⁰ (with a variant spelling in 2 Cor. 1:19 of Σιλβανός), *Silvanus*: 2 Cor.

⁹Σιλᾶς, α or Σίλας, ᾱ (still other spellings are attested for the NT; s. B-D-F §53, 2; 125, 2), ὁ (several times in Joseph. as a Semitic name; OGI 604, 4; IGR III 817, 1. Evidently=שׁלׁוֹנָס, the Aram. form [in Palmyrene inscriptions] of שׁוּלַנְס Saul) Silas. This name, which occurs only in Ac, is borne by a respected member of the church at Jerusalem who was prophetically gifted 15:22, 27; he was sent to Antioch and stayed there vss. 32, 33 [34] v.l.; later he accompanied Paul on his so-called second missionary journey 15:40–18:5 (mentioned nine times). Despite CWeizsäcker, *Das apost. Zeitalter* 1892, 247 et al., incl. LRadermacher, *ZNW* 25, 1926, 295, it is hardly to be doubted that this Silas is the same pers. as the Σιλουανός who is mentioned in Paul and 1 Pt. See the next entry and s. AStegmann, *Silvanus als Missionär u. 'Hagiograph'* 1917. S. also s.v. Ἰωάν(ν)ης 6.—TRE III 609. M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 923.

¹⁰Σιλουανός, οῦ, ὁ (Diod S 11, 27, 1, a Σ. as contemporary with the battle of Salamis [480 B.C.]; OGI 533, 50 [time of Augustus] and later ins and pap; Jos., *Ant.* 20:14; in rabbinic lit. שׁלׁוֹנְי: CIJ I, 596) *Silvanus*; surely the same man who appears in Ac as Σίλας (q.v.). Either he had two names (like Paul), one Semit. and one Lat. (Zahn), or Σιλουανός is the Lat. form of the same name that is Grecized in

1:19; 1 Thess. 1:1; 2 Thess. 1:1; 1 Pet. 5:12. Over the following decade Silas would become a trusted colleague and faithful missionary who traveled extensively with the apostle Paul. That God blessed this choice of Silas by Paul is without question.

The second expansion element of the first sentence main clause is: παραδοθείς τῇ χάριτι τοῦ κυρίου ὑπὸ τῶν ἀδελφῶν, *having been commended to the grace of the Lord by the brethren*. In Acts 14:26, Luke uses this same verb in describing the blessing of the church on Paul and Barnabas at the beginning of the first missionary journey: Ἀντιόχειαν, ὅθεν ἦσαν παραδεδομένοι τῇ χάριτι τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς τὸ ἔργον ὃ ἐπλήρωσαν, *Antioch, where they had been commended to the grace of God for the work that they had completed*. The details of this dedication of these missionaries is described in 13:3, τότε νηστεύσαντες καὶ προσευξάμενοι καὶ ἐπιθέντες τὰς χεῖρας αὐτοῖς ἀπέλυσαν, *Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off*. The church at Antioch again realized another opportunity for them to have impact way beyond their city. And so they joyously commissioned Paul and Silas to revisit the churches of Galatia and minister elsewhere as God would lead them.

Some unwarranted interpretive speculation often enters the picture at this point.¹¹ It cannot be concluded from Luke's statement that the church sided with Paul and against Barnabas. It is also unlikely that the church warmly sent off Paul and Silas, but didn't do so with Barnabas and Mark.¹² These kinds of conclusions are 'reading between the lines' for possible implications, but they also are assessing the situation from a modern western winner / loser mentality. Luke gives absolutely no signal of presenting the situation with this way of thinking. In fact, the more I have probed into the details of Luke's language with careful assessment of his perspective the less impressed I am of most every interpretation that highlights ongoing high level tension between Paul and Barnabas at this point. To be sure, there was deep difference of opinion about the role of John Mark in the proposed missionary trip. But there was common agreement that it was needed and necessary. Additionally, they split up the responsibility of revisiting the churches quite logically with Barnabas going to Cyprus and Paul to Galatia. This seems to have been an easy and mutually agreeable decision by both men. Luke's attention is going to focus on Paul, and thus quite naturally more detail about how he was sent off by the church at Antioch is provided. It also was more important to stress that the church at Antioch concurred with Paul's choice of Silas as a member of the Jerusalem church to accompany him on this trip. This is the focus of Luke's statement.

A few copyists of this text were bothered by how Silas could have gone back to Jerusalem some months earlier (cf. 15:33), and now be back at Antioch for Paul to choose to travel with him from Antioch on the second missionary journey. Thus 15:34 was inserted much later on in order to have Silas in Antioch: *Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still* (cf. KJV).¹³ But the overwhelming evidence does not contain verse 34. Luke assumes that his readers would understand that enough time passed so that Silas made another trip to Antioch from Jerusalem, and thus was available when needed for this new missionary trip.¹⁴

Σίλας (B-D-F §125, 2; Mlt-H. 109f; 146). **2 Cor 1:19** (v.l. Σιλβανός, which is also found Diod S 11, 41, 1); **1 Th 1:1**; **2 Th 1:1** (s. also the subscr. of 2 Th); 1 Pt 5:12 (this pass. has given rise to the conclusion that Silvanus was somehow or other [as translator? in Sb 8246, 38 Germanus speaks before the court δι' Ἀνουβίου ἑρμηνεύοντος] connected w. the writing of 1 Pt; e.g., Zahn [Einleitung II 3 10f], GWohlenberg [NKZ 24, 1913, 742–62], WBornemann [Der erste Petrusbrief—eine Taufrede des Silvanus?: ZNW 19, 1920, 143ff], Harnack [Mission I 4 1923, 85], LRadermacher [Der 1 Pt u. Silvanus: ZNW 25, 1926, 287ff]; ESelwyn, 1 Pt '46, 9–17 but s. WKümmel [Introd. NT, tr. HKee, '75, 416–25]).—M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 923.]

¹¹It is clear now that the sympathy of the church at Antioch is with Paul rather than with Barnabas in the cleavage that has come. The church probably recalled how in the pinch Barnabas flickered and went to the side of Peter and that it was Paul who for the moment stood Paulus *contra mundum* for Gentile liberty in Christ against the threat of the Judaizers from Jerusalem." [A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Ac 15:40.]

¹²According to Luke, Paul set out with the warm approval of the church; he does not say so much of Barnabas." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 757.]

¹³εδοξε δε τω Σίλα επιμειναι αυτου (C) 33. 36. 323. 453. 614. (945). 1175. 1739. 1891 al sy^{h**} sa bo^{mss}

| εδ. δε τω Σ. (-λεα D*) επιμ. προς (-D*) αυτους, μονος δε Ιουδας επορευθη (+ εις Ιερουσαλημ w vg^{cl}) D gig l w vg^{cl}

| txt P⁷⁴ x A B E Ψ m vgst sy^p bo

[Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle, Kurt Aland et al., *Novum Testamentum Graece*, 27. Aufl., rev. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelstiftung, 1993), 367.]

¹⁴Lüdemann 175 observes that difficulties regarding the movements of Silas are resolved if 15:22, 27, 32f. may be regarded as redactional, v. 40 as traditional. Or (he asks), is there simply negligence on Luke's part? A further possibility is that the negligence belonged to the tradition as Luke collected it, perhaps not all from one source of information. Thirty years on, who could remember precisely the movements of a secondary character?" [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*,

not allow them; 8 so, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. 9 During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

16 1 Κατήντησεν δὲ [καί] εἰς Δέρβην καὶ εἰς Λύστραν. καὶ ἰδοὺ μαθητῆς τις ἦν ἐκεῖ ὀνόματι Τιμόθεος, υἱὸς γυναικὸς Ἰουδαίας πιστῆς, πατρὸς δὲ Ἑλλήνος, 2 ὃς ἐμαρτυρεῖτο ὑπὸ τῶν ἐν Λύστροις καὶ Ἰκονίῳ ἀδελφῶν. 3 τοῦτον ἠθέλησεν ὁ Παῦλος σὺν αὐτῷ ἐξελεῖν, καὶ λαβὼν περιέτεμεν αὐτὸν διὰ τοὺς Ἰουδαίους τοὺς ὄντας ἐν τοῖς τόποις ἐκείνοις· ἥδισαν γὰρ ἅπαντες ὅτι Ἑλλήν ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ ὑπῆρχεν. 4 Ὡς δὲ διεπορεύοντο τὰς πόλεις, παρεδίδοσαν αὐτοῖς φυλάσσειν τὰ δόγματα τὰ κεκριμένα ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ πρεσβυτέρων τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις. 5 Αἱ μὲν οὖν ἐκκλησίαι ἐστερεοῦντο τῇ πίστει καὶ ἐπερίσσευον τῷ ἀριθμῷ καθ' ἡμέραν.

6 Διήλθον δὲ τὴν Φρυγίαν καὶ Γαλατικὴν χώραν κωλυθέντες ὑπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος λαλῆσαι τὸν λόγον ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ· 7 ἐλθόντες δὲ κατὰ τὴν Μυσίαν ἐπέιραζον εἰς τὴν Βιθυνίαν πορευθῆναι, καὶ οὐκ εἶσεν αὐτοὺς τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ· 8 παρελθόντες δὲ τὴν Μυσίαν κατέβησαν εἰς Τρωάδα. 9 Καὶ ὄραμα διὰ [τῆς] νυκτὸς τῷ Παύλῳ ὤφθη, ἀνὴρ Μακεδῶν τις ἦν ἐστὼς καὶ παρακαλῶν αὐτὸν καὶ λέγων· διαβάς εἰς Μακεδονίαν βοήθησον ἡμῖν. 10 ὣς δὲ τὸ ὄραμα εἶδεν, εὐθέως ἐζητήσαμεν ἐξελεῖν εἰς Μακεδονίαν συμβιβάζοντες ὅτι προσκέκληται ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς εὐαγγελισασθαι αὐτοὺς.

1 Tim. 4:14. 14 Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders.

14 μὴ ἀμέλει τοῦ ἐν σοὶ χαρίσματος, ὃ ἐδόθη σοὶ διὰ προφητείας μετὰ ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου.

2 Tim. 1:5-7. 5 I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. 6 For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; 7 for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline.

5 ὑπόμνησιν λαβὼν τῆς ἐν σοὶ ἀνυποκρίτου πίστεως, ἣτις ἐνώκησεν πρῶτον ἐν τῇ μάμμῃ σου Λωΐδι καὶ τῇ μητρὶ σου Εὐνίκῃ, πέπεισμαι δὲ ὅτι καὶ ἐν σοὶ. 6 Δι' ἣν αἰτίαν ἀναμιμνήσκω σε ἀναζωπυρεῖν τὸ χάρισμα τοῦ θεοῦ, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐν σοὶ διὰ τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν μου. 7 οὐ γὰρ ἔδωκεν ἡμῖν ὁ θεὸς πνεῦμα δειλίας ἀλλὰ δυνάμεως καὶ ἀγάπης καὶ σωφρονισμοῦ.

In this second phase of the trip Paul and Silas travel first through Galatia where existing churches were already in place. Then in a search for ministry opportunity they end up in the northwestern province of Mysia at Troas.

Ministry in southern Galatia. In Galatia, they visit Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch where Paul and Barnabas had established congregations on the first missionary journey. In his very summary depiction Luke stresses two significant things: a) Timothy joins the group at Lystra, and b) their ministry is blessed with these churches expanding in significant numbers. In Paul's writings, allusions to this period of ministry are found in First and Second Timothy written many years later to Timothy while he was helping the church at Ephesus. In both letters Paul makes reference to Timothy's joining the missionary group at Lystra.

Once they finished visiting the churches in Cilicia, they followed a major trade route west and came to Derbe first, which was the last church to be established on the first trip (cf. Acts 14:6, 20-21). This town was less than 130 kilometers west of Tarsus and was where the Paul and Barnabas had enjoyed great success in first preaching the Gospel to this Gentile town.¹⁶ From there Paul and Silas made their



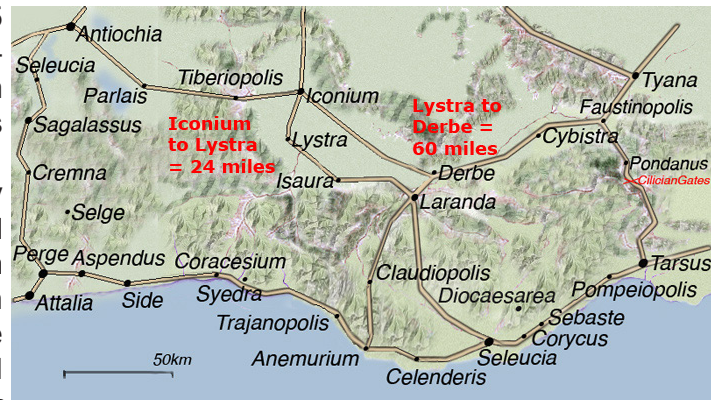
Modern site of ancient Derbe

¹⁶“An ancient city of Lycaonia located on the plateau of south central Anatolia (modern Turkey). Derbe was located along the main road which connected the chief city of the region Iconium (modern Konya) with Laranda. The city was located in the Lycaonian district of the Roman province of Galatia. Iconium was a Phrygian city but Derbe and the neighboring city of Lystra spoke a local dialect called Lycaonian (Acts 14:11). The name of the city may be derived from a word in the local tongue which means “juniper tree.”

“Derbe was the home of Gaius who accompanied Paul to Ephesus (Acts 19:29) and on his trip through Macedonia and Greece (Acts 20:4, Derbaios). Derbe was the most easterly point of the first missionary journey of Paul and Barnabas. Paul and Barnabas preached in Iconium and some of the leaders of the city planned to have them stoned. Paul and Barnabas, after hearing of the plot against them, fled to the Lycaonian cities of Lystra and Derbe. In Lystra, Paul healed a lame man and the people believed that he was the incar-

way westward about 96 kilometers to Lystra and then 35 kilometers north to Iconium and finally some 165 kilometers northwest to Pisidian Antioch. The existing system of Roman roads made travel through this mountainous region much easier.

The account of Timothy joining the missionary party receives the greatest attention by both Luke and Paul in their accounts. Luke describes it in vv. 1-3. When the two missionaries arrived at Lystra in the Christian congregation there they met a young man with the name of Timothy, Τιμόθεος. Luke gives some traits that called attention to him. His mother was Jewish, but his father



was Greek: υἱὸς γυναικὸς Ἰουδαίας πιστῆς, πατὴρ δὲ Ἕλληνας. From 2 Tim. 1:5 we know that his mother's name was Εὐνίκη, Eunice.¹⁷ Additionally, Paul indicates that his grandmother's name was Λωῖς, Lois.¹⁸ Both these women were devout Christians who gave Timothy a wonderful spiritual heritage: ὑπόμνησιν λαβὼν τῆς ἐν σοὶ ἀνυποκρίτου πίστεως, ἣτις ἐνώκησεν πρῶτον ἐν τῇ μάμμῃ σου Λωῖδι καὶ τῇ μητρὶ σου Εὐνίκη, πέπεισμαι δὲ ὅτι καὶ ἐν σοί, I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. Also in 3:15, reference is made to the religious upbringing of Timothy: καὶ ὅτι ἀπὸ βρέφους [τὰ] ἱερὰ γράμματα οἶδας, τὰ δυνάμενά σε σοφίσει εἰς σωτηρίαν διὰ πίστεως τῆς ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, and how from childhood you have known the sacred writings that are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. With no mention of religious faith by Timothy's father, the implication seems to be that he was not a Chris-

nation of Hermes and Barnabas that of Zeus. The crowd, after much persuasion, was convinced that Paul and Barnabas were only men. This same crowd was later incited by Jews from Antioch and Iconium to stone Paul and drag him outside the city walls, thinking that he was dead. Paul, however, did revive and the next day he and Barnabas departed for Derbe. Once in Derbe Paul and Barnabas preached the good news and many individuals were converted. Paul with Silas returned to Derbe on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:1) and Paul probably returned again at the beginning of his third missionary journey (Acts 18:23).

"Little is known of the early history of the Derbe but it was undoubtedly hellenized after the Greeks took control of this region. The city later came under Roman control and was added to Cappadocia as the "eleventh strategia" (ca. 65 B.C.). Derbe was later seized by Antipater, a local ruler, who was called "the robber" by Strabo (11.535), but he was also a friend of Cicero (Fam. 13.73). Later the city came under the control of Amyntas the king of Galatia after he defeated Antipater. Derbe became a part of Roman Galatia upon the death of Amyntas in 25 B.C. During the 1st century A.D. the nearby city Laranda was under the control of Antiochus IV of Commagene. Derbe at this time gained a special title which indicated a special link to the Emperor Claudius, hence the title Claudio-Derbe. This appellation (Clau[di]a Derb[e]) is recorded on the coins of the city dating to the 2d century A.D."

[John D. Wineland, "Derbe (Place)" In vol. 2, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 144-45.]

¹⁷"EUNICE (PERSON) [Gk Eunikē (Εὐνίκη)]. A resident of the city of Lystra in Lycaonia where she, her mother Lois, and her son Timothy were apparently converted by Paul and Barnabas on their journey together into Asia Minor (2 Tim 1:5; Acts 16:1). Timothy eventually became one of Paul's most significant helpers.

"The writer of 2 Timothy describes Timothy's faith as 'a faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice' (1:5). Thus he seems to be aware of a tradition that their conversion preceded Timothy's. Later in the letter Timothy is reminded that 'from childhood you have been acquainted with the sacred writings which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Jesus Christ' (3:15). Perhaps this text is intended to refer to Eunice and Lois as Timothy's earliest teachers. While there is no reason to think that the author of 2 Timothy was incorrect about the names of Eunice and Lois and that they were converted before Timothy, the idea that he had been taught the Scriptures from childhood, thus implying an orthodox upbringing by Eunice and Lois, may be a development of Christian legend (Dibelius and Conzelmann *Pastoral Epistles Hermeneia*, 98). Information in Acts 16:3 indicates that Timothy was uncircumcised, i.e., in reality the product of 'a lax Judaism' (Haenchen *Acts MeyerK*, 478).

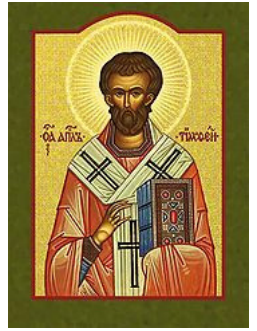
"From Acts 16:1, which states that Timothy was 'the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer; but his father was a Greek,' it becomes evident that Eunice was a Jewess who had married a gentile and later had become Christian. Since no interference from Timothy's father is noted when Paul decides to circumcise Timothy, some have assumed that he must have been dead. Accordingly, a few manuscripts (generally considered secondary) refer to Eunice as a widow in 16:1."

[Florence Morgan Gillman, "Eunice (Person)" In vol. 2, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 670.]

¹⁸"LOIS (PERSON) [Gk Lois (Λοῖς)]. Lois, the mother of Eunice and grandmother of Timothy, was a Christian convert apparently at the hands of Paul and Barnabas in Lystra of Lycaonia (2 Tim 1:5; cf. Acts 16:1). 2 Timothy 1:5 indicates that she and her daughter Eunice were believers before Timothy. It is possible that the reference in 2 Tim 3:15 to Timothy's instruction from childhood in the sacred writings is an allusion to teaching he received from Lois and Eunice. Like her daughter, who is specifically identified as a Jewess (Acts 16:1), Lois was probably also Jewish." [Florence Morgan Gillman, "Lois (Person)" In vol. 4, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 356.]

tian. The speculation that Eunice was a widow by this point is without any clear indication in scripture texts.

Luke describes the good reputation that Timothy had among the believers in both Lystra and the relatively close town of Iconium: ὃς ἐμαρτυρεῖτο ὑπὸ τῶν ἐν Λύστροις καὶ Ἰκονίῳ ἀδελφῶν, **He was well spoken of by the believers in Lystra and Iconium.** This corresponds well with Paul's reference about Timothy's commissioning to Gospel ministry at this time in 1 Tim. 4:14: μὴ ἀμέλει τοῦ ἐν σοὶ χαρίσματος, ὃ ἐδόθη σοὶ διὰ προφητείας μετὰ ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου, **Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders.** As Timothy prepared to join Paul and Silas in their missionary travels, the leaders of the house churches in Lystra, and perhaps also in Iconium, τοῦ πρεσβυτερίου, came together to commission Timothy to serve God with Paul and Silas as their representative. In 2 Tim. 1:6 Paul indicates that he participated in that commissioning service: Δι' ἣν αἰτίαν ἀναμιμνήσκω σε ἀναζωπυρεῖν τὸ χάρισμα τοῦ θεοῦ, ὃ ἐστὶν ἐν σοὶ διὰ τῆς ἐπιθέσεως τῶν χειρῶν μου, **For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands.** Thus as had happened to Paul and Barnabas at the beginning of the first missionary journey (Acts 13:1-4), and perhaps again with Paul and Silas (Acts 15:40), the church at Antioch commissioned these missionaries to Gospel ministry as their representatives. Now the church at Lystra, and possibly also at Iconium, send out Timothy in similar manner as their representative. What an encouraging day that must have been for everyone involved. The harvest from Paul and Barnabas' labor some years earlier was paying big dividends with this young man joining the two missionaries.



The only negative side -- that is, for Timothy -- was that he had to undergo circumcision as a young man: τοῦτον ἠθέλησεν ὁ Παῦλος σὺν αὐτῷ ἐξελεθεῖν, καὶ λαβὼν περιέτεμεν αὐτὸν διὰ τοὺς Ἰουδαίους τοὺς ὄντας ἐν τοῖς τόποις ἐκείνοις· ἦδεισαν γὰρ ἅπαντες ὅτι Ἕλλην ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ ὑπήρχεν, **Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him; and he took him and had him circumcised because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.** In the Jewish tradition, one's mother determined whether or not a person was considered Jewish, rather than his father. Paul understood this quite well, and sought to avoid unnecessary controversy with Timothy going with them into the Jewish synagogues.¹⁹

The addition of Timothy to the team of missionaries would prove to be a momentous decision. This young man would become one of the chief leaders of the Christian movement as time passed.²⁰ Now with both Silas and Timothy helping him, Paul had an outstanding team in place to carry the Gospel to new places and to do church planting effectively. In Macedonia, a fourth team member, Luke, would join the group, thus making the team even more effective.

The second emphasis of Luke in 16:4-5 stresses the help that Paul and Silas gave to the congregations

¹⁹This clearly contradicts the later charges brought against Paul in Jerusalem (Acts 21:21): κατηχήθησαν δὲ περὶ σοῦ ὅτι ἀποστασίαν διδάσκεις ἀπὸ Μωϋσέως τοὺς κατὰ τὰ ἔθνη πάντας Ἰουδαίους λέγων μὴ περιτέμνειν αὐτοὺς τὰ τέκνα μηδὲ τοῖς ἔθεσιν περιπατεῖν. **They have been told about you that you teach all the Jews living among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, and that you tell them not to circumcise their children or observe the customs.**

²⁰From Lystra, Timothy accompanies Paul and Silas (Silvanus), first throughout the neighboring towns, and then further west into Macedonia, circulating to the churches the decisions rendered by the elders of the church in Jerusalem, and evangelizing new territories. Apparently Timothy's role increases in authority as he and Silas become Paul's emissaries in Beroea (Acts 17:14) and elsewhere in Macedonia (19:22).

Timothy's legitimacy and trustworthiness as Paul's authoritative representative are underscored in the Pauline Epistles (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10-11; Phil. 2:19-22; 1 Thess. 3:1-6). Timothy is sent by Paul to the churches not only to gather information concerning their welfare, but to further the work of the gospel among them, to remind them of Paul's teaching, to encourage them to endure in the face of persecution, and in many ways to serve as Paul's selfless emissary. In addition, Timothy is described as the co-sender of Philippians, 2 Corinthians, 1 Thessalonians, and Philemon, as well as Colossians and 2 Thessalonians. Paul's language in describing Timothy emphasizes the special relationship of trust which developed between the two over the course of their association (1 Cor. 4:17; Phil. 2:22; 1 Thess. 3:2).

That Timothy is the named recipient of the Pastoral Letters that bear his name (1-2 Timothy) attests to his reputation during the 1st century as an important follower and close coworker of Paul, although he is characterized in the letters as somewhat inexperienced and in need of encouragement. In the first letter, Paul urges Timothy to remain in Ephesus to deal with false teachers and to establish proper patterns of worship and of community order. The second letter, written ostensibly during Paul's imprisonment (possibly in Rome), is primarily a letter of exhortation and encouragement, in the style of a final testament. Paul warns Timothy to avoid becoming entangled in controversies, but to continue to be bold in opposing false teaching and to uphold the traditions handed on to him. In contrast to the first letter, Timothy is here urged not to remain in Ephesus, but to return to Paul as soon as possible. A reference to Timothy in Heb. 13:23 suggests that he was at one time imprisoned, but later released."

[Jane S. Lancaster, "Timothy" In *Eerdmans Dictionary of the Bible*, ed. David Noel Freedman, Allen C. Myers and Astrid B. Beck (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 2000), 1313.]

in these four towns of Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Pisidian Antioch: 4 Ὡς δὲ διεπορεύοντο τὰς πόλεις, παρεδίδοσαν αὐτοῖς φυλάσσειν τὰ δόγματα τὰ κεκριμένα ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ πρεσβυτέρων τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις. 5 Αἱ μὲν οὖν ἐκκλησῖαι ἐστερεοῦντο τῇ πίστει καὶ ἐπερίσσευον τῷ ἀριθμῷ καθ' ἡμέραν. 4 As they went from town to town, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem. 5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in numbers daily. As they traveled to each town Silas presented the letter (cf. Acts 15:23-29) from the leadership in Jerusalem to each of the house church groups in the towns. Probably, a copy of the letter was made by most if not all the Christian groups. Certainly both Silas and Paul had opportunity to present their interpretation of the significance and implications of the letter. It would be fascinating to know the details of the conversations that took place in each of the presentations.



The impact of their ministry on these churches is described by Luke as very positive (cf. v. 5): Αἱ μὲν οὖν ἐκκλησῖαι ἐστερεοῦντο²¹ τῇ πίστει καὶ ἐπερίσσευον τῷ ἀριθμῷ καθ' ἡμέραν, So the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in numbers daily. Both spiritual and numerical growth took place. This is the third 'summary statement' of Luke about growth in Christian churches: cf. 6:7; 9:31; 16:5. This was the third time that Paul had traveled through this region, twice on the first missionary journey and now this time. Both this visit and the early re-visiting of the churches after being established by Paul and Barnabas (14:22-23) was targeting strengthening the congregations into viable, enduring communities of faith.²² This kind of pastoral care by the apostle helped this young congregations to endure and thrive.

The next phase after leaving the region of southern Galatia would prove challenging, but not because of persecution or opposition to their preaching of the Gospel: 6 Διήλθον δὲ τὴν Φρυγίαν καὶ Γαλατικὴν χώραν κωλυθέντες ὑπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος λαλῆσαι τὸν λόγον ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ· 7 ἐλθόντες δὲ κατὰ τὴν Μυσίαν ἐπείραζον εἰς τὴν Βιθυνίαν πορευθῆναι, καὶ οὐκ εἴασεν αὐτοὺς τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ· 8 παρελθόντες δὲ τὴν Μυσίαν κατέβησαν εἰς Τρωάδα, 6 They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. 7 When they had come opposite Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; 8 so, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas.



Great insight is to be gleaned from these statements about how God leads His people in ministry. When the missionaries finished their visit of the house churches in Pisidian Antioch, their desire was to continue westward to Ephesus. But this was not in God's plan for this trip. So the missionary team turned northward following Roman roads through the regions of Phrygia and Galatia intending to travel into the province of Bithynia. But a second time God closed the door to preaching the Gospel there. Consequently they now turned westward again with a 'green light' from the Holy Spirit. They traveled through the Roman province of Mysia and ended up at the port city of Troas. One would assume that as the missionary team of Paul, Silas, and Timothy passed through the towns in this region they preached the Gospel wherever opportunity presented itself. But Luke does not give any details of their activities along the route. A later reference to previously existing churches in Phrygia and Galatia

²¹ στερεόω (στερεός) fut. 2 sg. στερεώσεις; 1 aor. ἐστερέωσα. Pass.: impf. ἐστερεοῦμην; fut. 3 sg. στερεωθήσεται LXX; 1 aor. ἐστερεώθην; pf. ptc. fem. ἐστερεωμένη 1 Km 6:18 (X. et al.; LXX; En 103:15)

1. to render physically firm, make strong, make firm. lit., of impotent limbs, pass. be strengthened, become strong ἐστερεώθησαν αἱ βάσεις αὐτοῦ Ac 3:7 (X., De Re Equ. 4, 3 τοὺς πόδας; Hippocr., Epid. 2, 3, 17 ed. Littre; V p. 118 τὰ ὀστέα; Hippiatr. II 82, 1). On the basis of this passage the act. is used in referring to the same act of healing τοῦτον ἐστερέωσεν τὸ ὄνομα the name (of Christ) has made this man strong vs. 16.

2. to cause to become firmer in such matters as conviction or commitment, strengthen, fig. ext. of 1 (1 Km 2:1 ἡ καρδία), pass. αἱ ἐκκλησῖαι ἐστερεοῦντο τῇ πίστει the congregations were continually (impf.) being strengthened in the faith Ac 16:5.—DELG s.v. 2 στεῖρα, B στερεός. M-M. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 943.]

²² Acts 14:22-23. 22 ἐπιστηρίζοντες τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν μαθητῶν, παρακαλοῦντες ἐμμένειν τῇ πίστει καὶ ὅτι διὰ πολλῶν θλίψεων δεῖ ἡμᾶς εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ. 23 χειροτονήσαντες δὲ αὐτοῖς καθ' ἐκκλησίαν πρεσβυτέρους, προσευξάμενοι μετὰ νηστειῶν παρέθεντο αὐτοὺς τῷ κυρίῳ εἰς ὃν πεπιστεύκεισαν.

22 There they strengthened the souls of the disciples and encouraged them to continue in the faith, saying, "It is through many persecutions that we must enter the kingdom of God." 23 And after they had appointed elders for them in each church, with prayer and fasting they entrusted them to the Lord in whom they had come to believe.

suggest that evangelizing work took place on this journey through the area.²³ One would suspect that such ministry would have taken place by these missionaries.

What happened in the city of Troas²⁴ is Luke's central focus: 9 Καὶ ὄραμα διὰ [τῆς] νυκτὸς τῷ Παύλῳ ὤφθη, ἀνὴρ Μακεδῶν τις ἦν ἐστὼς καὶ παρακαλῶν αὐτὸν καὶ λέγων· διαβὰς εἰς Μακεδονίαν βοήθησον ἡμῖν. 10 ὡς δὲ τὸ ὄραμα εἶδεν, εὐθέως ἐζητήσαμεν ἐξελεθεῖν εἰς Μακεδονίαν συμβιβάζοντες ὅτι προσκέκληται ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς εὐαγγελισασθαι αὐτούς. 9 During the night Paul had a vision: there stood a man of Macedonia pleading with him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them. It was heard that Paul received his "Macedonian call" in a dream while sleeping at night.²⁵ The city was an important port city in this region and had a long history of Greek influence.²⁶ Through this dream, ὄραμα, God was able to



Modern remains of Troas

²³**Acts 18:23.** Καὶ ποιήσας χρόνον τινὰ ἐξῆλθεν διερχόμενος καθεξῆς τὴν Γαλατικὴν χώραν καὶ Φρυγίαν, ἐπιστηρίζων πάντας τοὺς μαθητάς.

After spending some time there he departed and went from place to place through the region of Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples.

In addition to the lack of details about their activity while passing through this region, the manner in which Luke refers to the region, τὴν Φρυγίαν καὶ Γαλατικὴν χώραν, and in 18:23, τὴν Γαλατικὴν χώραν καὶ Φρυγίαν, is somewhat confusing. The singular article τὴν with both Φρυγίαν and χώραν raises the question of whether he was using Φρυγίαν as a noun -- thus distinct from Galatia = 'Phrygia and the Galatian region' -- or as an adjective with the resulting meaning 'the Phrygian - Galatian region.' Clearly Φρυγία is a noun, but in ancient Greek nouns sometimes took on adjective roles, usually in but not limited to the Genitive case spelling. Probably the latter understanding is to be preferred both in 16:5 and 18:23.

²⁴**Τρωάς, ἄδος, ἡ** (also Τρωάς) **Troas, (the) Troad**, actually fem. of the noun Τρώς and the adj. Τρώος; *a city and region in the northwest corner of Asia Minor, near the site of ancient Troy*. So since Hom. Hymns and Trag.; the Trag. connect it with γῆ, as does Hdt. 5, 26 ἐν τῇ Τρωάδι γῆ. But Hdt. also uses the word 5, 122, 2 without any addition of the region in general, and the same is true of X.; Diod S 14, 38, 2 τὰς ἐν τῇ Τρωάδι πόλεις; 14, 38, 3 several cities κατὰ τὴν Τρωάδα; 17, 7, 10; 17, 17, 6 (cp. ἡ Ἰνδική Hdt. 3, 106, 2=Ἰνδική χώρα 3, 98, 2). In a time when there were many cities named Ἀλεξάνδρεια the one located in the Troad was known as Ἀλεξάνδρεια [ἡ] Τρωάς=the Trojan Alexandria (Polyb. 5, 111, 3; Strabo 13, 1, 1 p. 581; OGI 441, 165f [81 B.C.]). This city, as well as the region around it, was occasionally called Τρωάς for short (Ath. 26, 2; Pauly-W. I 1396, 15f and 2d ser. VII/1, 383f).—In our lit. Τρωάς has the article in Paul in **2 Cor 2:12** (B-D-F §261, 4) and prob. means the region, which the apostle soon left (vs. 13) for Macedonia. Elsewhere the article is almost always omitted, as is usually the case w. place-names (B-D-F §261, 1). In **Ac 20:6**, the only exception, the use of the art. can be justified as a glance backward at the preceding verse, where T. almost certainly means the city. In vs. **6** ἡ T.=Troas, which was just mentioned.—The other passages are: **Ac 16:8, 11; 2 Ti 4:13**; IPhld 11:2; ISm 12:1 and its terminal subscription; IPol 8:1.—Pauly-W. VII 525–84; Kl. Pauly V 975; PECS 407 (s.v. Ilion). [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1019.]

²⁵In antiquity important decisions frequently follow a vision or revelation (e.g., Herodotus 7.12—It seems to Xerxes that a tall and godly man stood over him and said ...; Plato, *Apology* 33C—Socrates feels commanded by God through an oracle; *Chariton, Chaereas and Callirhoe* 1.12—Theron's plan to throw Callirhoe into the sea the next day to get rid of her is stopped when, in sleep, he has a dream in which he sees a closed door; Suetonius, *Julius Caesar* 32—Caesar has a dream before leaving Spain for Rome that he will have sovereignty over the whole world; Suetonius, *Claudius* 1—Drusus, the father of Claudius, sees an apparition of a barbarian woman, speaking in Latin, forbidding him to pursue the defeated Germanic tribes further; Philostratus, *Life of Apollonius* 4.34—Apollonius detours on a trip to Rome because he has a dream that compels him to go to Crete; Gen 31:10–13, 24—a journey is dictated to Jacob in a dream; Josephus, *Antiquities* 11.8.5 § 334—a journey is dictated in a dream to Alexander the Great; *Life* 42 §§ 208–10—a course of action is dictated to Josephus by a dream in which a certain person stood by him and said ...). Gentile (Cicero, *On Divination* 1.30.64; Artemidorus, *Dream Book*) and Jew (Josephus, *Antiquities* 1.12.1 § 208; 2.9.4 § 217; 5.4.2 § 193; 6.14.2 § 334; 7.7.3 § 147; 8.4.6 § 125; 11.8.4 § 327; 13.12.1 § 322) alike regarded dreams as vehicles for divine communication." [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 139.]

²⁶Trōas was in a mountainous area of northwestern Asia Minor, dominated by the Ida massif and surrounded on three sides by the Aegean Sea, not far from the site of ancient Troy. It was an important port because of a great artificial harbor constructed there. At first the town was called Antigoneia, founded in 310 B.C. by Antigonos I (382–301), one of the successors of Alexander the Great. After Antigonos's death in 301, it was renamed Alexandria in honor of Alexander, and in order to distinguish it from other Alexandrias, it became known as 'Alexandria Troas.' In time it was made a Roman colony by Augustus (Colonia Augusta Troadensium or Colonia Augusta Troas). It served as a port of embarkation for those sailing to Greece. See 20:5–6; 2 Cor 2:12–13; 2 Tim 4:13. Paul's route through Asia Minor to Troas is not too clear in this account, when one tries to follow it according to known ancient Roman roads that crisscrossed the land, but Luke does speak correctly of Troas and its place in the Roman system of roads, communication, and embarkation. See W. P. Bowers, "Paul's Route"; C. J. Hemer, "Alexandria Troas," *TynBull* 26 (1975): 79–112; J. M. Cook, *The Troad: An Archaeological and*

communicate His will to the apostle about where to go next on this trip. This very clear direction in contrast to the previous struggles in finding the right direction proved to be significant, since ministry there would mean planting the Gospel on the European continent.

From a literary perspective something very important happens here. Up through verse 8 the narrative has been in the third person singular (= Paul) or plural (=the missionary team): κατέβησαν εἰς Τρωάδα, *they came down to Troas*. But beginning in verse 10, it shifts to the first person plural: ἐζητήσαμεν ἐξελθεῖν εἰς Μακεδονίαν, *we sought to depart to Macedonia*. Why the shift? The most popular, and probable answer, is that the author of Acts has joined the group. This marks the first of five sections in Acts where the third person narrative shifts to the first person narrative: 16:10–17; 20:5–15; 21:1–18; 27:1–29; 28:1–16.²⁷ Between these so-called ‘We Sections’ the narrative is consistently third person. Does 16:10 signal that Luke now joins the missionary team as a permanent member of the traveling group? Historically this has been the dominant understanding.²⁸ The unexplained problem with this view is why does he then shift back and forth with most of the remaining material in Acts being in the third person.²⁹ One of the assumed implications of the shift here to the first person ‘we’ is to give greater authentication to his writing now as an eye-witness to the events being described. But this presupposes his dependency on other sources for everything else in Acts causes them to be less certain and accurate accounts. Such an assumption is more modern western reasoning than first century thinking, and thus is highly questionable. No explanation of what Luke is doing by this literary method is completely satisfactory and can account for all the issues present. Probably Luke does join the missionary party of Paul, Silas, and Timothy at Troas. But whether he consistently remains with them or not cannot be determined with certainty. If the assumption is correct, then Troas along with Lystra become points where the missionary team undergoes expansion with the addition of Luke and Timothy.

What Luke indicates clearly in v. 10 is that the missionary team upon learning of Paul’s dream concluded unanimously that this was God’s call to cross over to the Roman province of Macedonia: ὡς δὲ τὸ ὄραμα εἶδεν, εὐθέως ἐζητήσαμεν ἐξελθεῖν εἰς Μακεδονίαν συμβιβάζοντες ὅτι προσκέκληται ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς εὐαγγελισασθαι αὐτοῦς, *When he had seen the vision, we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia, being convinced that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them*.³⁰ Thus the now larger missionary group set out to evangelize the province of Macedonia.³¹ Since shipping between Troas and Samothrace in Macedonia was



Topographical Study (Oxford: Clarendon, 1973), 198–204; P. Trebilco, “Asia,” *The Book of Acts in Its Graeco-Roman Setting* (BAFCS 2), 291–362, esp. 357–59.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 578-79.]

²⁷Note the locations: 16:10–17 (Troas & Philippi); 20:5–15 (Philippi, Troas, Assos, Mitylene, Chios, Miletus); 21:1–18 (Cos, Rhodes, Patara, Phoenicia, Tyre, Ptolemais, Caesarea, Jerusalem); 27:1–29 (Jerusalem, Sidon, Myra, Fair Havens, Malta); 28:1–16 (Malta, Syracuse, Rhegium, Puteoli, Rome)

²⁸“Three different explanations of this phenomenon have been offered: (a) the we-sections indicate the author’s presence as an eyewitness at these points (as in Polybius 3.4.13 or Josephus, *Against Apion* 1.55); (b) they point to a diary or source used by the author of Acts (like Xenophon, *Anabasis*, or Lucian, *How to Write History* 16); or (c) they are a literary creation of the author (as in Homer, *Odyssey* 14.244–58; Vergil, *Aeneid* 3.5; Lucian, *True Story*; Ezra 8:23–9:15; *Antiochene Acts of Ignatius*). No one of these hypotheses has been able to convince a majority of scholars.” [Charles H. Talbert, *Reading Acts : A Literary and Theological Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, Rev. ed., Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2005), 140.]

²⁹Some of the shifting is the natural part of a narrative that shifts focus from the missionary group to either Paul or other individuals. And while the group is in Jerusalem at the end of the third missionary journey, only Paul is mentioned and the missionary group disappears from the narrative from 21:19 through 26:32. The group only resurfaces at 27:1 as ‘we’.

³⁰“The Western text recasts v. 10 to read: ‘Then awakening, he related the vision to us, and we recognized that the Lord had called us to evangelize those in Macedonia.’” [Richard N. Longenecker, “The Acts of the Apostles” In *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Volume 9: John and Acts, ed. Frank E. Gaebelen (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 458.]

³¹“The land of the Makedones, a territory in the Balkan Peninsula, bordered on the W by Illyria, on the E by Thrace, and on the S by Thessaly. Its mountainous terrain is cut by the rivers Axios (modern Vardar) and Strymon (modern Struma), which flow into the Aegean from the N. It is covered today by northern Greece, southern Yugoslavia, and the southwestern corner of Bulgaria. The population was ethnically and linguistically mixed: the Macedonian language contained Thraco-Phrygian, Illyrian, and Greek elements.” [F. F. Bruce, “Macedonia (Place)” In vol. 4, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 454.]

extensive, finding a boat to ride over on was not a large problem. The motivation behind the trip over is clearly expressed: συμβιβάζοντες ὅτι προσέκληται ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς εὐαγγελίσασθαι αὐτούς. The entire group agreed that God had spoken to Paul in behalf of the entire group to evangelize the people in Macedonia (εὐαγγελίσασθαι αὐτούς). Once again with the missionary group moving into unchurched territory the first task was preaching the Gospel. Disciplining converts would come afterwards.

6.1.3 Ministry in Macedonia, Acts 16:11-17:14; Phil 4:15-16

Acts 16:11-17:14. 11 We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, 12 and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. 13 On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. 14 A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. 15 When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us.

16 One day, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. 17 While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, "These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation." 18 She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

19 But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities. 20 When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, "These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews 21 and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe." 22 The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. 23 After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely. 24 Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. 27 When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul shouted in a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." 29 The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 Then he brought them outside and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 They answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." 32 They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. 34 He brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.

35 When morning came, the magistrates sent the police, saying, "Let those men go." 36 And the jailer reported the message to Paul, saying, "The magistrates sent word to let you go; therefore come out now and go in peace." 37 But Paul replied, "They have beaten us in public, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they going to discharge us in secret? Certainly not! Let them come and take us out themselves." 38 The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens; 39 so they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. 40 After leaving the prison they went to Lydia's home; and when they had seen and encouraged the brothers and sisters there, they departed.

17 After Paul and Silas had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. 2 And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three sabbath days argued with them from the scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This is the Messiah, Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you." 4 Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. 5 But the Jews became jealous, and with the help of some ruffians in the marketplaces they formed a mob and set the city in an uproar. While they were searching for Paul and Silas to bring them out to the assembly, they attacked Jason's house. 6 When they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some believers before the city authorities, shouting, "These people who have been turning the world upside down have come here also, 7 and Jason has entertained them as guests. They are all acting contrary to the decrees of the emperor, saying that there is another king named Jesus." 8 The people and the city officials were disturbed when they heard this, 9 and after they had taken bail from Jason and the others, they let them go.

10 That very night the believers sent Paul and Silas off to Beroea; and when they arrived, they went to the Jewish synagogue. 11 These Jews were more receptive than those in Thessalonica, for they welcomed the message very eagerly and examined the scriptures every day to see whether these things were so. 12 Many of them therefore believed, including not a few Greek women and men of high standing. 13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica learned that the word of God had been proclaimed by Paul in Beroea as well, they came there too, to stir up and incite the crowds. 14 Then the believers immediately sent Paul away to the coast, but Silas and Timothy remained behind.

11 Αναχθέντες δὲ ἀπὸ Τρωάδος εὐθυδρομήσαμεν εἰς Σαμοθράκην, τῇ δὲ ἐπιούσῃ εἰς Νέαν πόλιν 12 κάκειθεν εἰς Φιλίππους, ἧτις ἐστὶν πρώτη[ς] μερίδος τῆς Μακεδονίας πόλις, κολωνία. Ἔμην δὲ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ πόλει διατρίβοντες ἡμέρας τινάς. 13 τῇ τε ἡμέρᾳ τῶν σαββάτων ἐξήλθομεν ἕξω τῆς πύλης παρὰ ποταμὸν οὗ ἐνομιζόμεν προσευχὴν εἶναι, καὶ καθίσαντες ἐλαλοῦμεν ταῖς συνελθούσαις γυναῖξιν. 14 καὶ τις γυνὴ ὀνόματι Λυδία, πορφυρόπωλις πόλεως Θυατείρων σεβομένη τὸν θεόν, ἤκουεν, ἧς ὁ κύριος διήνοιξεν τὴν καρδίαν προσέχειν τοῖς λαλουμένοις ὑπὸ τοῦ Παύλου. 15 ὡς δὲ ἐβαπτίσθη καὶ ὁ οἶκος αὐτῆς, παρεκάλεσεν λέγουσα· εἰ κεκρίκατέ με πιστὴν τῷ κυρίῳ εἶναι, εἰσελθόντες εἰς τὸν οἶκόν μου μένετε· καὶ παρεβιάσατο ἡμᾶς.

16 Ἐγένετο δὲ πορευομένων ἡμῶν εἰς τὴν προσευχὴν παιδίσκην τινὰ ἔχουσαν πνεῦμα πύθωνα ὑπαντῆσαι ἡμῖν, ἧτις ἐργασίαν πολλὴν παρεῖχεν τοῖς κυρίοις αὐτῆς μαντευομένη. 17 αὕτη κατακολουθοῦσα τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ ἡμῖν ἔκραζεν λέγουσα· οὗτοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι δοῦλοι τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου εἰσὶν, οἵτινες καταγγέλλουσιν ὑμῖν ὁδὸν σωτηρίας. 18 τοῦτο δὲ ἐποίει ἐπὶ πολλὰς ἡμέρας. διαπονηθεὶς δὲ Παῦλος καὶ ἐπιστρέψας τῷ πνεύματι εἶπεν· παραγγέλλω σοι ἐν ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐξελεῖν ἀπ' αὐτῆς· καὶ ἐξήλθεν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ. 19 Ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ κύριοι αὐτῆς ὅτι ἐξήλθεν ἡ ἐλπίς τῆς ἐργασίας αὐτῶν, ἐπιλαβόμενοι τὸν Παῦλον καὶ τὸν Σιλᾶν εἴλκυσαν εἰς τὴν ἀγορὰν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἄρχοντας 20 καὶ προσαγαγόντες αὐτοὺς τοῖς στρατηγοῖς εἶπαν· οὗτοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἐκταράσσουσιν ἡμῶν τὴν πόλιν, Ἰουδαῖοι ὑπάρχοντες, 21 καὶ καταγγέλλουσιν ἔθνη ἃ οὐκ ἔξεστιν ἡμῖν παραδέχεσθαι οὐδὲ ποιεῖν Ῥωμαίοις οὕσιν. 22 καὶ συνεπέστη ὁ ὄχλος κατ' αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ στρατηγοὶ περιρῆξαντες αὐτῶν τὰ ἱμάτια ἐκέλευον ῥαβδίζειν, 23 πολλὰς τε ἐπιθέντες αὐτοῖς πληγὰς ἔβαλον εἰς φυλακὴν παραγγείλαντες τῷ δεσμοφύλακι ἀσφαλῶς τηρεῖν αὐτούς. 24 ὃς παραγγελίαν τοιαύτην λαβὼν ἔβαλεν αὐτούς εἰς τὴν ἐσωτέραν φυλακὴν καὶ τοὺς πόδας ἠσφαλίσατο αὐτῶν εἰς τὸ ξύλον. 25 Κατὰ δὲ τὸ μεσονύκτιον Παῦλος καὶ Σιλᾶς προσευχόμενοι ὕμνου τὸν θεόν, ἐπηκροῶντο δὲ αὐτῶν οἱ δέσμιοι. 26 ἄφνω δὲ σεισμός ἐγένετο μέγας ὥστε σαλευθῆναι τὰ θεμέλια τοῦ δεσμοπηρίου· ἠνεώχθησαν δὲ παραχρῆμα αἱ θύραι πᾶσαι καὶ πάντων τὰ δεσμὰ ἀνέθη. 27 ἔξυπνος δὲ γενόμενος ὁ δεσμοφύλαξ καὶ ἰδὼν ἀνεωγμένας τὰς θύρας τῆς φυλακῆς, σπασάμενος [τὴν] μάχαιραν ἠμellen ἑαυτὸν ἀναιρεῖν νομίζων ἐκπεφευγῆναι τοὺς δεσμίους. 28 ἐφώνησεν δὲ μεγάλη φωνὴ [ὃ] Παῦλος λέγων· μηδὲν πράξης σεαυτῷ κακόν, ἅπαντες γὰρ ἐσμεν ἐνθάδε. 29 αἰτήσας δὲ φῶτα εἰσεπήδησεν καὶ ἔντρομος γενόμενος προσέπεσεν τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ [τῷ] Σιλᾶ 30 καὶ προαγαγὼν αὐτοὺς ἕξω ἔφη· κύριοι, τί με δεῖ ποιεῖν ἵνα σωθῶ; 31 οἱ δὲ εἶπαν· πιστεύσον ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ σωθήσῃ σὺ καὶ ὁ οἶκός σου. 32 καὶ ἐλάλησαν αὐτῷ τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ. 33 καὶ παραλαβὼν αὐτοὺς ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ τῆς νυκτὸς ἔλουσεν ἀπὸ τῶν πληγῶν, καὶ ἐβαπτίσθη αὐτὸς καὶ οἱ αὐτοῦ πάντες παραχρῆμα, 34 ἀναγαγὼν τε αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν οἶκον παρέθηκεν τράπεζαν καὶ ἠγαλλιάσατο πανοικεῖ πεπιστευκῶς τῷ θεῷ. 35 Ἡμέρας δὲ γενομένης ἀπέστειλαν οἱ στρατηγοὶ τοὺς ῥαβδούχους λέγοντες· ἀπόλυσον τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐκείνους. 36 ἀπήγγειλεν δὲ ὁ δεσμοφύλαξ τοὺς λόγους [τούτους] πρὸς τὸν Παῦλον ὅτι ἀπέσταλκαν οἱ στρατηγοὶ ἵνα ἀπολυθῆτε· νῦν οὖν ἐξελθόντες πορεύεσθε ἐν εἰρήνῃ. 37 ὁ δὲ Παῦλος ἔφη πρὸς αὐτούς· δεῖραντες ἡμᾶς δημοσίᾳ ἀκατακρίτους, ἀνθρώπους Ῥωμαίους ὑπάρχοντας, ἔβαλαν εἰς φυλακὴν, καὶ νῦν λάθρα ἡμᾶς ἐκβάλλουσιν; οὐ γὰρ, ἀλλὰ ἐλθόντες αὐτοὶ ἡμᾶς ἐξαγαγέτωσαν. 38 ἀπήγγειλαν δὲ τοῖς στρατηγοῖς οἱ ῥαβδούχοι τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα. ἐφοβήθησαν δὲ ἀκούσαντες ὅτι Ῥωμαῖοί εἰσιν, 39 καὶ ἐλθόντες παρεκάλεσαν αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐξαγαγόντες ἠρώτων ἀπελθεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς πόλεως. 40 ἐξελθόντες δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς φυλακῆς εἰσῆλθον πρὸς τὴν Λυδίαν καὶ ἰδόντες παρεκάλεσαν τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ ἐξήλθαν.

17 Διοδεύσαντες δὲ τὴν Ἀμφίπολιν καὶ τὴν Ἀπολλωνίαν ἦλθον εἰς Θεσσαλονικὴν ὅπου ἦν συναγωγὴ τῶν Ἰουδαίων. 2 κατὰ δὲ τὸ εἰωθὸς τῷ Παύλῳ εἰσῆλθον πρὸς αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐπὶ σάββατα τρία διελέξατο αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν, 3 διανοίγων καὶ παρατιθέμενος ὅτι τὸν χριστὸν ἔδει παθεῖν καὶ ἀναστῆναι ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ χριστὸς [ὃ] Ἰησοῦς ὃν ἐγὼ καταγγέλλω ὑμῖν. 4 καὶ τινες ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐπίσθησαν καὶ προσεκληρώθησαν τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ τῷ Σιλᾶ, τῶν τε σεβομένων Ἑλλήνων πλῆθος πολὺ, γυναικῶν τε τῶν πρώτων οὐκ ὀλίγαι. 5 Ζηλώσαντες δὲ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ προσλαβόμενοι τῶν ἀγοραίων ἄνδρας τινὰς πονηροὺς καὶ ὄχλοποιήσαντες ἐθορύβουν τὴν πόλιν καὶ ἐπιστάντες τῇ οἰκίᾳ Ἰάσονος ἐζήτησαν αὐτοὺς προαγαγεῖν εἰς τὸν δῆμον· 6 μὴ εὐρόντες δὲ αὐτοὺς ἔσυρον Ἰάσονα καὶ τινὰς ἀδελφοὺς ἐπὶ τοὺς πολιτάρχας βοῶντες ὅτι οἱ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἀναστατώσαντες οὗτοι καὶ ἐνθάδε πάρεσιν, 7 οὓς ὑποδέδεκται Ἰάσων· καὶ οὗτοι πάντες ἀπέναντι τῶν δογμάτων Καίσαρος πράσσοουσιν βασιλέα ἕτερον λέγοντες εἶναι Ἰησοῦν. 8 ἐτάραξαν δὲ τὸν ὄχλον καὶ τοὺς πολιτάρχας ἀκούοντας ταῦτα, 9 καὶ λαβόντες τὸ ἱκανὸν παρὰ τοῦ Ἰάσονος καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀπέλυσαν αὐτούς.

10 Οἱ δὲ ἀδελφοὶ εὐθέως διὰ νυκτὸς ἐξέπεμψαν τὸν τε Παῦλον καὶ τὸν Σιλᾶν εἰς Βέροϊαν, οἵτινες παραγενόμενοι εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἀπήγεσαν. 11 οὗτοι δὲ ἦσαν εὐγενέστεροι τῶν ἐν Θεσσαλονικίᾳ, οἵτινες ἐδέξαντο τὸν λόγον μετὰ πάσης προθυμίας καθ' ἡμέραν ἀνακρίνοντες τὰς γραφὰς εἰ ἔχοι ταῦτα οὕτως. 12 πολλοὶ μὲν οὖν ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐπίστευσαν καὶ τῶν Ἑλληνίδων γυναικῶν τῶν εὐσχημόνων καὶ ἀνδρῶν οὐκ ὀλίγοι. 13 Ὡς δὲ ἔγνωσαν οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Θεσσαλονικῆς Ἰουδαῖοι ὅτι καὶ ἐν τῇ Βεροίᾳ κατηγγέλη ὑπὸ τοῦ Παύλου ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, ἦλθον κάκει

σαλεύοντες και παράσσοντες τοὺς ὄχλους. 14 εὐθέως δὲ τότε τὸν Παῦλον ἐξαπέστειλαν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ πορεύεσθαι ἕως ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν, ὑπέμεινάν τε ὁ τε Σιλᾶς καὶ ὁ Τιμόθεος ἐκεῖ.

Phil. 4:15-16. 15 You Philippians indeed know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you alone. 16 For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me help for my needs more than once.

15 οἴδατε δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς, Φιλιππηῖοι, ὅτι ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, ὅτε ἐξῆλθον ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, οὐδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία ἐκοινωνήσεν εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήψεως εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς μόνοι, 16 ὅτι καὶ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκη καὶ ἅπαξ καὶ δις εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μοι ἐπέμψατε.

Luke's description of the time spent in Macedonia centers primarily on three cities: Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. Other towns are mentioned in passing: Samothrace, Neapolis prior to Philippi; Amphipolis, Apollonia prior to Thessalonica. Most of his narrative centers on Philippi. Two of these towns where churches were established will receive letters from Paul: First and Second Thessalonians (written on this same trip from Athens and then Corinth); Philippians (written from imprisonment in Rome in the early 60s).



The region of Macedonia had a long history of monarchial rule for about a thousand years prior to Christ. From the seventh century onward for three hundred years it was the Argead dynasty that maintained independency from Greece and other outside forces, even from the Persian rulers who invaded Greece from 514 to 479 BCE. Philip II of Macedonia (359-336 BCE) managed to consolidate his rule over Macedonia and expand it at the expense of Illyria on the west and Thrace on the east. In 338 BCE he took control of Athens and Thebes at the battle of Chaeronea in Boeotia and made himself master over all of Greece. He intended to do battle with the Persians but was assassinated before carrying out his plans. His son, Alexander II (the Great), however, expanded the Macedonian rule to encompass the entire eastern Mediterranean world in ten short years before his untimely death in 323 BCE. With his death, Macedonia came under the control of Cassander, one of the generals who divided up Alexander's empire. A series of wars with the Romans followed that eventually ended in defeat of the Macedonians and their loss of Greece (197 BCE) and then the loss of Macedonia to the Romans in 148 BCE. With the building of a massive road, the Egnatian Way, across Macedonia from the Adriatic Sea all the way to the Aegean Sea, the Romans consolidated their power in that region, and made Macedonia a base of operations in their push eastward into Asia and beyond. In 44 BCE Claudius Caesar divided this massive province up into several component parts thus making Macedonia a senatorial province under the governorship of a proconsul.

Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke would encounter many challenges during the several months of ministry in the province around 49 to 50 AD. The opposition to the preaching of the Gospel both by the Jewish synagogues and by local residents would force the team to flee one city after another. Yet, go there to ministry came out of a profound conviction of God's leadership. By the time Paul arrived in Corinth some months later he indicates that he came from Macedonia and Athens to them "in weakness and in fear and in much trembling" (κἀγὼ ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ καὶ ἐν φόβῳ καὶ ἐν τρόμῳ πολλῶ ἐγενόμην πρὸς ὑμᾶς; 1 Cor. 1:3). Thus ministry in Macedonia would have real challenges, but God would leave behind these missionaries several newly established congregations that would thrive and grow in spite of facing opposition. The first church to be established, the one at Philippi, would become one of Paul's strongest supporters in ministry as he mentions in Phil. 4:15-16 (see above).

Lessons. One of the distinctive patterns of their ministry in Macedonia would be the prominent role that women would play in the emerging congregations. Paul in his writings will name Euodia and Syntyche at Philippi as leaders (Phil. 4:2-3), while Luke will indicate the pivotal role of Lydia at Philippi (Acts 16:14-15), a large number of 'leading women' at Thessalonica (γυναικῶν τε τῶν πρώτων οὐκ ὀλίγαι; 17:4) and a number of 'Greek women of high standing' at Berea (τῶν Ἑλληνίδων γυναικῶν τῶν εὐσχημόνων καὶ ἀνδρῶν οὐκ ὀλίγοι; 17:12). The affirmation of women in God's eyes proclaimed in the Gospel found receptive ears among a growing number of women. This stands somewhat in contrast to Paul's earlier experience at Pisidian Antioch where "devout women of high standing" (τὰς σεβομένης γυναῖκας τὰς εὐσχήμονας; 14:50) were instruments of persecution of Paul and Barnabas. The Macedonian Gentile women evidently were more open to the Gospel than were those in Pisidia. But given the history of women in Macedonia reaching all the way back to Salome, Phillip's wife and Alexander's

mother, three centuries before, this openness is not surprising. Salome won extraordinary legal rights for women that became deeply ingrained in the Macedonian tradition and were respected even by the Romans centuries later. Thus a woman like Lydia could own and operate her own business in Macedonia, whereas it would have been difficult if not impossible to have done that anywhere else in the empire at this point in time. So this preaching of the Gospel in Macedonia would bring some unexpected changes to the way church life would function in the Christian movement. Women would step forward as leaders of churches and powerful influences on the shaping of church life.

6.1.3.1 Work in Philippi, Acts 16:12-40; Phil. 1:4-6, 4:15-16; 1 Thess 2:2

Acts 16:11-40. 11 We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis, 12 and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city for some days. 13 On the sabbath day we went outside the gate by the river, where we supposed there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and spoke to the women who had gathered there. 14 A certain woman named Lydia, a worshiper of God, was listening to us; she was from the city of Thyatira and a dealer in purple cloth. The Lord opened her heart to listen eagerly to what was said by Paul. 15 When she and her household were baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home." And she prevailed upon us.

16 One day, as we were going to the place of prayer, we met a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners a great deal of money by fortune-telling. 17 While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, "These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation." 18 She kept doing this for many days. But Paul, very much annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

19 But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities. 20 When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, "These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews 21 and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe." 22 The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods. 23 After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to keep them securely. 24 Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was an earthquake, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. 27 When the jailer woke up and saw the prison doors wide open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, since he supposed that the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul shouted in a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." 29 The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 Then he brought them outside and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 They answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." 32 They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. 34 He brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God.

35 When morning came, the magistrates sent the police, saying, "Let those men go." 36 And the jailer reported the message to Paul, saying, "The magistrates sent word to let you go; therefore come out now and go in peace." 37 But Paul replied, "They have beaten us in public, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they going to discharge us in secret? Certainly not! Let them come and take us out themselves." 38 The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens; 39 so they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city. 40 After leaving the prison they went to Lydia's home; and when they had seen and encouraged the brothers and sisters there, they departed.

11 Ἀναχθέντες δὲ ἀπὸ Τρωάδος εὐθύδρομήσαμεν εἰς Σαμοθράκην, τῇ δὲ ἐπιούσῃ εἰς Νέαυ πόλιν 12 κάκειθεν εἰς Φιλίππους, ἣτις ἐστὶν πρώτη[ς] μερίδος τῆς Μακεδονίας πόλις, κολωνία. Ἔμεν δὲ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ πόλει διατριβόντες ἡμέρας τινάς. 13 τῇ τε ἡμέρᾳ τῶν σαββάτων ἐξήλθομεν ἔξω τῆς πύλης παρὰ ποταμὸν οὗ ἐνομιζομεν προσευχὴν εἶναι, καὶ καθίσαντες ἔλαλοῦμεν ταῖς συνελθούσαις γυναῖξιν. 14 καὶ τις γυνὴ ὀνόματι Λυδία, πορφυρόπωλις πόλεως Θυατείρων σεβομένη τὸν θεόν, ἤκουεν, ἣς ὁ κύριος διήνοιξεν τὴν καρδίαν προσέχειν τοῖς λαλουμένοις ὑπὸ τοῦ Παύλου. 15 ὡς δὲ ἐβαπτίσθη καὶ ὁ οἶκος αὐτῆς, παρεκάλεσεν λέγουσα· εἰ κερικάτέ με πιστὴν τῷ κυρίῳ εἶναι, εἰσελθόντες εἰς τὸν οἶκόν μου μένετε· καὶ παρεβιάσατο ἡμᾶς.

16 Ἐγένετο δὲ πορευομένων ἡμῶν εἰς τὴν προσευχὴν παιδίσκην τινὰ ἔχουσαν πνεῦμα πύθωνα ὑπαντῆσαι ἡμῖν, ἣτις ἐργασίαν πολλὴν παρεῖχεν τοῖς κυρίοις αὐτῆς μαντευομένη. 17 αὕτη κατακολουθοῦσα τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ ἡμῖν ἔκραζεν λέγουσα· οὗτοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι δοῦλοι τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου εἰσίν, οἵτινες καταγγέλλουσιν ὑμῖν ὁδὸν

σωτηρίας. 18 τοῦτο δὲ ἐποίει ἐπὶ πολλὰς ἡμέρας, διαπονηθεὶς δὲ Παῦλος καὶ ἐπιστρέψας τῷ πνεύματι εἶπεν· παραγγέλλω σοι ἐν ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐξελεῖν ἀπ' αὐτῆς· καὶ ἐξήλθεν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ. 19 Ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ κύριοι αὐτῆς ὅτι ἐξήλθεν ἡ ἐλπίς τῆς ἐργασίας αὐτῶν, ἐπιλαβόμενοι τὸν Παῦλον καὶ τὸν Σιλᾶν εἴλκυσαν εἰς τὴν ἀγορὰν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἄρχοντας 20 καὶ προσαγαγόντες αὐτοὺς τοῖς στρατηγοῖς εἶπαν· οὗτοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἐκταράσσουσιν ἡμῶν τὴν πόλιν, Ἰουδαῖοι ὑπάρχοντες, 21 καὶ καταγγέλλουσιν ἔθνη ἃ οὐκ ἔξεστιν ἡμῖν παραδέχεσθαι οὐδὲ ποιεῖν Ἰωμαίοις οὖσιν. 22 καὶ συνεπέστη ὁ ὄχλος κατ' αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ στρατηγοὶ περιρήξαντες αὐτῶν τὰ ἱμάτια ἐκέλευον ῥαβδίζειν, 23 πολλὰς τε ἐπιθέντες αὐτοῖς πληγὰς ἔβαλον εἰς φυλακὴν παραγγείλαντες τῷ δεσμοφύλακι ἀσφαλῶς τηρεῖν αὐτούς. 24 ὃς παραγγελίαν τοιαύτην λαβὼν ἔβαλεν αὐτοὺς εἰς τὴν ἐσωτέραν φυλακὴν καὶ τοὺς πόδας ἠσφαλίσατο αὐτῶν εἰς τὸ ξύλον. 25 Κατὰ δὲ τὸ μεσονύκτιον Παῦλος καὶ Σιλᾶς προσευχόμενοι ὕμνου τὸν θεόν, ἐπηκροῶντο δὲ αὐτῶν οἱ δέσμοιοι. 26 ἄφνω δὲ σεισμός ἐγένετο μέγας ὥστε σαλευθῆναι τὰ θεμέλια τοῦ δεσμοπηρίου· ἠνεώχθησαν δὲ παραχρῆμα αἱ θύραι πᾶσαι καὶ πάντων τὰ δεσμὰ ἀνέθη. 27 ἐξυπνος δὲ γενόμενος ὁ δεσμοφύλαξ καὶ ἰδὼν ἀνεωγμένας τὰς θύρας τῆς φυλακῆς, σπασάμενος [τὴν] μάχαιραν ἤμελλεν ἐαυτὸν ἀναιρεῖν νομίζων ἐκπεφευγῆναι τοὺς δεσμίους. 28 ἐφώνησεν δὲ μεγάλη φωνὴ [ὁ] Παῦλος λέγων· μηδὲν πράξης σεαυτῷ κακόν, ἅπαντες γὰρ ἐσμεν ἐνθάδε. 29 αἰτήσας δὲ φῶτα εἰσεπήδησεν καὶ ἔντρομος γενόμενος προσέπεσεν τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ [τῷ] Σιλᾶ 30 καὶ προαγαγὼν αὐτοὺς ἔξω ἔφη· κύριοι, τί με δεῖ ποιεῖν ἵνα σωθῶ; 31 οἱ δὲ εἶπαν· πιστεύσον ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ σωθήσῃ σὺ καὶ ὁ οἶκός σου. 32 καὶ ἐλάλησαν αὐτῷ τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ. 33 καὶ παραλαβὼν αὐτοὺς ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ τῆς νυκτὸς ἔλουσεν ἀπὸ τῶν πληγῶν, καὶ ἐβαπτίσθη αὐτὸς καὶ οἱ αὐτοῦ πάντες παραχρῆμα, 34 ἀναγαγὼν τε αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν οἶκον παρέθηκεν τράπεζαν καὶ ἠγαλλίασατο πανοικεῖ πεπιστευκῶς τῷ θεῷ. 35 Ἡμέρας δὲ γενομένης ἀπέστειλαν οἱ στρατηγοὶ τοὺς ῥαβδούχους λέγοντες· ἀπόλυσον τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐκείνους. 36 ἀπήγγειλεν δὲ ὁ δεσμοφύλαξ τοὺς λόγους [τούτους] πρὸς τὸν Παῦλον ὅτι ἀπέσταλκαν οἱ στρατηγοὶ ἵνα ἀπολυθῆτε· νῦν οὖν ἐξελθόντες πορεύεσθε ἐν εἰρήνῃ. 37 ὁ δὲ Παῦλος ἔφη πρὸς αὐτούς· δεῖραντες ἡμᾶς δημοσίᾳ ἀκατακρίτους, ἀνθρώπους Ἰωμαίους ὑπάρχοντας, ἔβαλαν εἰς φυλακὴν, καὶ νῦν λάθρα ἡμᾶς ἐκβάλλουσιν; οὐ γὰρ, ἀλλὰ ἐλθόντες αὐτοὶ ἡμᾶς ἐξαγαγέτωσαν. 38 ἀπήγγειλαν δὲ τοῖς στρατηγοῖς οἱ ῥαβδούχοι τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα. ἐφοβήθησαν δὲ ἀκούσαντες ὅτι Ἰωμαῖοί εἰσιν, 39 καὶ ἐλθόντες παρεκάλεσαν αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐξαγαγόντες ἠρώτων ἀπελθεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς πόλεως. 40 ἐξελθόντες δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς φυλακῆς εἰσῆλθον πρὸς τὴν Λυδίαν καὶ ἰδόντες παρεκάλεσαν τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ ἐξήλθαν.

Phil. 1:3-6. 3 I thank my God every time I remember you, 4 constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, 5 because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.

3 Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ μνησίᾳ ὑμῶν 4 πάντοτε ἐν πάσῃ δεήσει μου ὑπὲρ πάντων ὑμῶν, μετὰ χαρᾶς τὴν δέησιν ποιούμενος, 5 ἐπὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης ἡμέρας ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν, 6 πεποιθῶς αὐτὸ τοῦτο, ὅτι ὁ ἐναρξάμενος ἐν ὑμῖν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐπιτελέσει ἄχρι ἡμέρας Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ·

Phil. 4:15-16. 15 You Philippians indeed know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you alone. 16 For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me help for my needs more than once.

15 οἴδατε δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς, Φιλιππηῖοι, ὅτι ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, ὅτε ἐξήλθον ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, οὐδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία ἐκοινωνήσεν εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήψεως εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς μόνοι, 16 ὅτι καὶ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ καὶ ἅπαξ καὶ δις εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μοι ἐπέμψατε.

1 Thess. 2:2. 2.1 You yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not in vain, 2 but though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition.

2 Αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἴδατε, ἀδελφοί, τὴν εἴσοδον ἡμῶν τὴν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὅτι οὐ κενὴ γέγονεν, 2 ἀλλὰ προπαθόντες καὶ ὑβρισθέντες, καθὼς οἴδατε, ἐν Φιλίπποις ἐπαρρησιασάμεθα ἐν τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν λαλῆσαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν πολλῷ ἀγῶνι.



When the missionary team left Troas, Luke says that went straight across the Aegean Sea stopping first at Samothrace for one day. It was a two day trip across the Aegean from Troas to Neapolis and Samothrace, a small island in the Aegean, was a convenient stop over spot for such a trip.³² It

^{32c} A small island located in the NE Aegean Sea (40°27' N; 25°32' E). It lies approximately 20 miles S of Thrace (Samos of Thrace, or the Thracian Samos) on a sea route between Macedonia and the Hellespont (Dardanelles) in Asia Minor. The name Samos, meaning

is doubtful that the missionary team got off the boat during this overnight layover.³³ Neapolis, Νέα πόλις (literally **New City**), was the port city for Philippi³⁴ on the western coast across from Troas.³⁵ The next day they arrived at Neapolis and then made their way the sixteen kilometers to Philippi. This was where Paul first set foot on the European continent. Its ‘claim to fame’ came earlier when the ships of Brutus and Cassius were moored there when they fought the Battle of Philippi in 42 BCE against Mark Antony and Octavian.



Philippi³⁶ was, as Luke indicates, ἡτις ἐστὶν πρώτη[ς] μερίδος τῆς Μακεδονίας πόλις, κολωνία, **which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony**. Luke’s first point is that Philippi was a city in the **first district of Macedonia**.³⁷ **It had a long history and was named** for Philip, the ruler who was the father of Alexander “height” or “mountain,” reflects its mountainous topography. With a summit more than one mile above sea level, Samothrace represents the highest point on all of the Aegean Islands. It is in view of the Trojan coast and represents the most conspicuous landmark for ships on the sea route. In the Iliad (13.12), Homer called Samothrace Poseidon’s island, because Poseidon surveyed the plains of Troy from the top of its mountains.

“Few people lived on the island before the 7th century B.C. During Greek and Roman history, Samothrace remained relatively insignificant, probably due to its rugged coastline and lack of a satisfactory harbor. In 190 B.C., Samothrace became independent after the Romans defeated Antiochus the Great at Magnesia (1 Macc 15:23). The island later came under Roman rule in 133 B.C., though Romans permitted autonomy on Samothrace after 19 B.C.

“Although unsuitable as a trade center, ships would anchor on the N shore of Samothrace near a town by the same name. The mountains provided a relatively safe place to shelter ships at night from SE winds, and ancient sailors preferred to anchor overnight when convenient or possible. The mountains also made it possible to locate Samothrace easily from sea. Consequently, the N shore of the island became an anchorage for many ships.”

[Donald A. D. Thorsen, “Samothrace (Place)” In vol. 5, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 949.]

³³Quite interestingly the later reverse trip from Neapolis to Troas will take five days according to Acts 20:6. How quickly one could travel at sea in that time depended greatly on favorable winds for the ship.

³⁴“A common name given to many Greco-Roman towns and cities founded³⁴ near older sites, meaning simply “new city.” The Neapolis mentioned in the NT (Acts 16:11) is certainly the seaport town for Philippi, which was 16 km inland. Located on a promontory on the coast of the Aegean Sea (40°56’ N; 24°23’ E), Neapolis had a harbor on both bays.” [Conrad Gempf, “Neapolis (Place)” In vol. 4, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1052.]

³⁵“The well-known city name (quotable Hdt.et al.) is prob. to be written Νέα πόλις (cp. SIG 107, 35 [410/409 B.C.] ἐν Νέαι πόλι; Meisterhans3-Schw. p. 137; PWarr 5, 8 [154 A.D.]; Diod S 20, 17, 1 Νέαν πόλιν; 20, 44, 1 ἐν Νέαι πόλει; Jos., Bell. 4, 449. Even in 247 A.D. τῆς Νέας πόλεως is found in pap [PViereck, Her 27, 1892, 516 II, 29f]; W-S. §5, 7i; Mlt-H. 278; Hemer, Acts 113) acc. Νέαν πόλιν Ac 16:11 (v.l. Νεάπολιν); IPol 8:1 (where, nevertheless, Νεάπολιν is attested and customarily printed). In both places our lit. means by Neapolis (New City, mod. Kavala) the harbor of Philippi in Macedonia (Ptolem. 3, 13; Strabo 7, Fgm. 36 p. 331; Appian, Bell. Civ. 4, 106 §446; Pliny, NH 4, 42 p. 58 Detl.; s. PECS 614; PCollart, Philippes ’37, 102–32, esp. p. 104).—RHarrisville s.v. καινός; Kl. Pauly IV 29f; B. 957f. Schmidt, Syn. II 94–123 (Syn. of καινός). DELG. M-M. EDNT. TW.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 669.]

³⁶The Greek city name is Φίλιπποι, the plural form of the personal name Φίλιππος, Philip. Literally the city name mean the Philipians. It shows up this way four times in the NT: Acts 16:12; 20:6; 1 Thess. 2:2; Phil. 1:1.

³⁷The uncertainty of the wording πρώτη[ς] μερίδος revolves around two possibilities: a) **which is the leading (πρώτη) city of the district of Macedonia**, or b) **which is a city in the first (πρώτης) district of Macedonia**. Note Omanson’s observations and assessment of the variations of wording:

The original text is most uncertain, and Hort thought that the original reading no longer existed in the surviving manuscripts. The oldest form of text in the existing Greek witnesses appears to be πρώτη τῆς μερίδος Μακεδονίας πόλις (a first city of the district of Macedonia). Since Hort wrote in the later nineteenth century, evidence now exists to show that the noun μερίς was used to refer to a geographical division, that is, to a “district.” But what is the meaning of πρώτη?

(1) The AV translation, “chief city,” does not agree with the fact that Thessalonica, not Philippi, was acknowledged to be the chief city, the capital, of Macedonia, and Amphipolis was the chief city of the district in which Philippi was situated.

(2) Some have suggested that Luke means that Philippi was the first Macedonian city to which Paul and his companions came in that district. But as a matter of fact the apostle first set foot in Neapolis, which apparently belonged to the same district as Philippi.

(3) In view of the use of πρώτη as a title of honor, others have suggested that this phrase should be translated “Philippi, which is a first city of the district of Macedonia, a colony.” But there are historical considerations against this interpretation.

The difficulties involved in the reading πρώτη led copyists to make various changes in the text. Among these, however, πρώτη μερίς is impossible because a city cannot be called a μερίς. The omission of τῆς μερίδος results in calling Philippi πρώτη τῆς Μακεδονίας πόλις, which merely increases the problem.

Since the best attested readings are all difficult, a conjectural reading, πρώτης μερίδος τῆς, supported by only three late Vulgate manuscripts, is followed. The sense of πρώτης μερίδος τῆς is “a city of the first district of Macedonia.” Perhaps the reading πρώτη τῆς μερίδος arose by accident when a copyist mistakenly repeated the letters τη. Or perhaps a copyist had mistakenly written πρώτη and then wrote της

the Great. Luke also explicitly identifies the city as a κολωνία, *colony*. This term, while only used here in the NT, commonly designated a city as a military outpost of the Roman army. From the secular sources of the time it is clear that large numbers of Roman troops were stationed at the city. Plus a very large number of retired Roman military had settled in and around the city to live out their remaining years there.³⁸ This gave the city a very distinctive Roman atmosphere layered across the long standing Greek and local Macedonian cultures already deeply rooted there. Additionally its status as a κολωνία, *Colonia Julia August Philippensis* in Latin, meant that Roman law, *ius Italicum*, was in place rather than the local legal system -- something important when Paul appealed to his Roman citizenship toward the end of his stay in the city. This gave the city more status with the Roman government in the capital of Rome itself. The Christian congregation that will emerge in the city will become one of the most important churches that Paul established in all of his ministry.

One should note that the first We-section of Acts, 16:10b-17, ends in the middle of this story, and will resume again at 20:5 after the missionary team returns to Macedonia from Achaia. Does this signal that Luke remained in Macedonia when the others went on to Athens and Corinth in Achaia? Perhaps, but also possible is that Luke puts himself into the background in this segment because he was not arrested in Philippi while Paul and Silas were, but not Timothy.³⁹ Timothy does not resurface in the narrative until 17:14, where he and Silas remain behind at Berea while Paul journeys on to Athens. In truth we really don't know why Luke drops out of the narrative at this point. But this 'gap' becomes the basis of many assertions about Luke's sources for the materials in 16:18-20:4.

Luke's narrative naturally subdivides into the following units of material: introduction (v. 12); a) Lydia's conversion (vv. 13-15); b) the exorcism of the slave girl (vv. 16-18); c) the violent reaction to the exorcism (vv. 19-24); d) the miraculous deliverance from jail (vv. 25-34); conclusion (vv. 35-40). Two miracles (exorcism & earthquake) and two conversions (Lydia & the jailer) form the heart of Luke's narrative. Paul's isolated references in Philippians and First Thessalonians allude back to this event and supplement the picture painted by Luke.

Introduction, v. 12: κάκειθεν εἰς Φιλίππους, ἧτις ἐστὶν πρώτη[ς] μερίδος τῆς Μακεδονίας πόλις, κολωνία. Ἔμεν δὲ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ πόλει διατρίβοντες ἡμέρας τινάς.

The arrival of the missionary team in Philippi began a lengthy stay in the city that covered several weeks, and possibly months. Luke's expression Ἔμεν ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ πόλει διατρίβοντες ἡμέρας τινάς, *We remained in this city for some days*, signals a lengthy period of time. From this introductory time marker comes some additional ones: τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῶν σαββάτων, *on the sabbath day* (v. 13); Ἐγένετο δὲ πορευομένων ἡμῶν εἰς τὴν προσευχὴν, *One day, as we were going to the place of prayer*, (v. 16); τοῦτο δὲ ἐποίει ἐπὶ πολλὰς ἡμέρας, *She kept doing this for many days* (v. 18); Κατὰ τὸ μεσονύκτιον, *about midnight* (v. 25); ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ τῆς νυκτὸς, *At the same hour of the night* (v. 33); Ἡμέρας δὲ γενομένης, *When morning came* (v. 35). The cumulative effect of these time markers is to signal that the missionary spent a period of several weeks in the city. We are not given great details regarding their activity, simply because Luke chose only two events to focus on: the conversion of Lydia, and the conversion of the jailer. Interestingly, although more details are given regarding the jailer than about Lydia, the jailer remains unnamed in the narrative. Perhaps this was done by Luke some time afterwards to protect the identity

over it to correct it. Since the manuscript evidence strongly supports the reading πρώτη, the final sigma is put in brackets to indicate uncertainty regarding the original text.

If the reading in the text is followed, it may be rendered "a city of the first district of Macedonia it is also a Roman colony" (TEV and similarly FC) or "which is a Roman colony in the first district of Macedonia" (CEV). Under Roman rule in the mid-second century B. C., Macedonia was divided into four administrative districts. When these four districts were later united into a single province, they nevertheless continued to be recognized as four geographical divisions. Philippi was "a city of the first district [out of four districts] of Macedonia." A number of modern translations follow the variant reading πρώτη τῆς μερίδος (NRSV, NIV, REB, TOB). NRSV, for example, says "a leading city of the district of Macedonia."

[Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger's Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 263-64.]

³⁸"M. Antony founded a colony in Philippi for Roman veterans of the battles of 42 B.C. After the battle of Actium (31 B.C.), Octavian settled still more veterans there, as well as the partisans of M. Antony evicted from Italy. He named it Colonia Iulia Augusta Philippensis, granting it libertas (self-government), ius italicum (same right as citizens of an Italian city), and immunitas (exemption from taxation)." [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 584.]

³⁹"Verbs or pronouns in the first person plural occur in vv. 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17; that is, the narrator expressly represents himself as present on the journey from Troas to Philippi, as visiting the place of prayer and entertained by Lydia, and as addressed by the prophesying girl. From this point 'We' disappears; this however means, or need mean, no more than that it was only Paul and Silas who were arrested and imprisoned—the narrator no longer played an active part in the story." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 776.]

of this man who worked for the Roman government.

Absolutely nothing is said regarding where the missionary team found lodging, and what they may have done before the Friday evening Jewish prayer service on the sabbath. They could have ‘camped out’ or have found an inn for lodging in or near the city.⁴⁰

a) Lydia’s conversion, vv. 13-15: 13 τῆ τε ἡμέρα τῶν σαββάτων ἐξήλθομεν ἔξω τῆς πύλης παρὰ ποταμὸν οὐ ἐνομιζόμεν προσευχὴν εἶναι, καὶ καθίσαντες ἐλαλοῦμεν ταῖς συνελθούσαις γυναῖξιν. 14 καὶ τις γυνὴ ὀνόματι Λυδία, πορφυρόπωλις πόλεως Θυατείρων σεβομένη τὸν θεόν, ἤκουεν, ἧς ὁ κύριος διήνοιξεν τὴν καρδίαν προσέχειν τοῖς λαλουμένοις ὑπὸ τοῦ Παύλου. 15 ὡς δὲ ἐβαπτίσθη καὶ ὁ οἶκος αὐτῆς, παρεκάλεσεν λέγουσα· εἰ κεκρίκατέ με πιστὴν τῷ κυρίῳ εἶναι, εἰσελθόντες εἰς τὸν οἶκόν μου μένετε· καὶ παρεβιάσατο ἡμᾶς.

Luke indicates that initial contact with Lydia came on a Jewish sabbath day, meaning a Friday evening gathering: τῆ τε ἡμέρα τῶν σαββάτων. This was the usual pattern for Paul on his travels as Acts 13:14 indicates. The location of the meeting place was ἔξω τῆς πύλης παρὰ ποταμὸν, **outside the city gate by a river**. Probably this was on the west side of town at the River Gangites. Quite interestingly, the missionary team did not know the exact location and so had to track it down: οὐ ἐνομιζόμεν προσευχὴν εἶναι.⁴¹ Most likely the meeting place was not in a building, but in open space. The missionaries did locate the meeting place and found a group of Jewish women gathered for prayer, although other activities could have taken place in the meeting. A προσευχὴν, **place of prayer**, usually is a synonym



Way Stations and Traveler Inns



Traditional place of Lydia by the River Gangites outside the west gate of the city

⁴⁰Traveling on land in the Roman empire from city to city meant going by a via, **road**. On the roads were periodic waystations where private individuals would find food and lodging (along with other unsavory options). These tended to be set up every few kilometers. In total the empire constructed and maintained over 400,000 kilometers of paved roads across the empire. For a very interesting and help analysis see “Roads in Ancient Rome,” at <http://www.crystalinks.com/romeroads.html>.

⁴¹“The river on which Philippi stood was the Gangites (or Cangites). The party were, it seems, looking for a προσευχή, or place of prayer (on the word see below), but there is considerable textual variation.

- | | | | | |
|-----|------------|-----------|-------|--------------------------------|
| (a) | ἐνομιζόμεν | προσευχὴν | εἶναι | A ^c C Ψ 33 81 pc bo |
| (b) | ἐνόμιζεν | προσευχὴν | εἶναι | κ |
| (c) | ἐνομιζόμεν | προσευχῇ | εἶναι | B pc |
| (d) | ἐνομιζέτο | προσευχῇ | εἶναι | A ^{*vid} E |
| (e) | ἐδόκει | προσευχῇ | εἶναι | D |
| (f) | ἐνόμιζεν | προσευχῇ | εἶναι | P ^{74vid} |

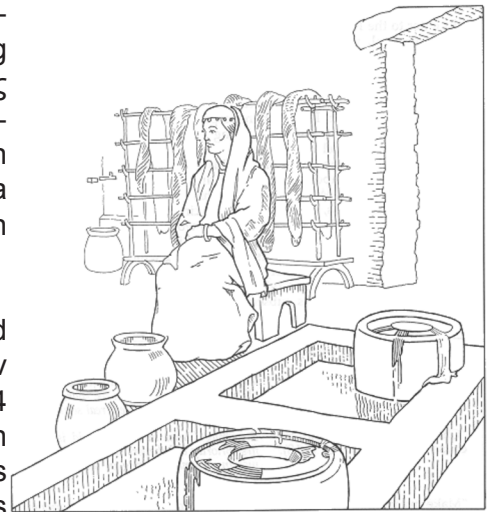
(f) is probably a slip and P⁷⁴ is often added to the MSS that have (d), (e) probably comes from (d), perhaps by way of the Latin *videbatur* (in d). (c), which must be translated ‘Where we were accustomed to pray (to be in prayer)’, involves an unusual use of the dative. Ropes (Begg. 3:155) prefers (d) with its less usual use of νομιζομαι: ‘Where a place of prayer was accustomed to be’, that is, ‘We went to an area where it was customary to find a place of prayer’. For this (Ropes thinks) (a), which yields a similar sense, was substituted: ‘Where we supposed there was a place of prayer’. Luke however elsewhere uses νομιζεν in the active (Lk. 2:44; Acts 7:25; 8:20; 14:19; 16:27; 17:29; 21:29; the only exception is Lk. 3:23, and this is a genuine passive and does not mean ‘is accustomed’), and this may tip the scales in favour of (a), which is accepted with some hesitation by Metzger (447), who thinks that ἐνόμιζεν in P⁷⁴ κ may testify to an earlier ἐνομιζόμεν, and that προσευχή in P⁷⁴ A B may have arisen through the omission of the horizontal stroke in -χῆ (= -χην). For νομιζεν cf. Josephus, *War* 7:128, 155; 2 *Macc.* 14:4.

Whether (a) or (d) is accepted, it seems to be implied that the visitors expected to find a προσευχή near the river. προσευχή in the NT is usually prayer, but it is used also for place of prayer, often but not necessarily a building. In what is described in ND 3:121 as the ‘earliest mention of a synagogue’ (CIJ 2:1440) the word used is προσευχή. Josephus, *Life* 277 is explicit (συνάγονται πάντες εἰς τὴν προσευχὴν, μέγιστον οἴκημα) and the word was borrowed in Latin (Juvenal, *Satire* 3:296, *ede ubi consistas, in qua te quaero prosequcha?*). See Philo, *Legatio* 132, 152, 346, 371; also NS 2:424–7. The question whether it was customary to establish places of prayer in the vicinity of water is discussed in Begg. 4:191 and NS 2:440–42. That this was a universal practice cannot be proved, though Josephus, *Ant.* 14:258 comes near to asserting it when he quotes a decree of Halicarnassus permitting the Jews to make προσευχαὶ πρὸς τῇ θαλάττῃ κατὰ τὸ πάτριον ἔθος. Cf. *Ant.* 12:106, with R. Marcus’ note; also *Ep. Aristaeas* 304f.; *PTebt* 86:16–20. StrB 2:742 note, ‘Der Brauch, die Gebetstätten in der Nähe von Gewässern zu errichten, wird in der rabbin. Literatur nicht erwähnt’, though Mekhilta on Exod. 12:1 notes that in the OT the word of God was given to prophets in the vicinity of water (Dan. 8:2; 10:4; Ezek. 1:3). I. Elbogen, *Der jüdische Gottesdienst* (1931/1967) 448 concludes, ‘Es ist sehr unwahrscheinlich, dass selbst in der Diaspora die Synagogen überall am Wasser lagen.’ See also Sukenik (*Synagogues* 49f.), who speaks more positively. ‘Although official Judaism has preserved no trace of a precept to that effect, there is abundant evidence that Jews in Hellenistic countries built their synagogues by preference in the proximity of water.’

[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 780-81.]



for συναγωγή in ancient literature.⁴² Upon locating the Jewish group, Paul began discussing with them the Gospel of Christ: καί καθίσαντες ἐλαλοῦμεν ταῖς συνελθούσαις γυναῖξιν.⁴³ Evidently he did this while sitting and talking in an informal way, rather than formally addressing a synagogue meeting as he had done in Pisidian Antioch and Iconium earlier (Acts 13:5, 14-15).



Paul's presentation caught the attention of one of the women named Lydia: καί τις γυνὴ ὀνόματι Λυδία, πορφυρόπωλις πόλεως Θυατείρων σεβομένη τὸν θεόν, ἤκουεν. She is only mentioned by name in vv. 14 and 40; her name was common in the ancient world more in Latin than in Greek.⁴⁴ Luke indicates that she originally came from Thyatira, which was a town in Asia north of Hierapolis, Laodicea, and Colossae in the Lycus Valley.⁴⁵ It was also located in the region by the same name Lydia.⁴⁶ She was a merchant dealing in purple cloth

⁴²προσευχή, ἦς, ἦ...

2. a place of or for prayer, place of prayer Ac 16:13, 16. Esp. used among Jews, this word is nearly always equivalent to συναγωγή in the sense of a cultic place (s. συναγωγή 2a; SKrauss, Pauly-W. 2 ser. IV, '32, 1287f; ins New Docs 3, 121f; 4, 201f). But many consider that the πρ. in Ac 16:13, 16 was not a regular synagogue because it was attended only by women (vs. 13), and because the word συν. is freq. used elsewh. in Ac (e.g. 17:1, 10, 17); the πρ. in our passage may have been an informal meeting place, perh. in the open air (s. BSchwank VD 3, '55, 279).—In the rare cases in which a polyth. place of prayer is called πρ., Jewish influence is almost always poss. (reff. fr. lit., ins and pap in Schürer II 425f; 439–47; Mayser I/32 '36 p. 19; Boffo, Iscrizioni 39–60. See also 3 Macc 7:20 al.; SEG VIII, 366, 6 [II B.C.], also reff. in XLII, 1849; Dssm., NB 49f [BS 222f]; MStrack, APF 2, 1903, 541f; Philo; perh. Jos., C. Ap. 2, 10 and Ant. 14, 258 [contradictory positions on the latter in Schürer II 441, 65 and 444, 76]; Elbogen 2 445; 448; 452; SZarb, De Judaeorum προσευχή in Act. 16:13, 16: Angelicum 5, 1928, 91–108; also συναγωγή 2). But such infl. must be excluded in the case of the ins fr. Epidaurus of IV B.C. (IG IV2/1, 106 I, 27), where the Doric form of προσευχή occurs in the sense 'place of prayer': ποτευχὰ καὶ βωμός. Hence it is also improbable in IPontEux I2, 176, 7 and in Artem. 3, 53 p. 188, 27; 189, 2.—RAC VIII 1134–1258; IX 1–36; BHHW I 518–23. MHengel, Proseuche u. Synagoge, KGKuhn Festschr., '71, 157–84; Schürer II 423–63.—DELG s.v. εὐχομαι. M-M. EDNT. TW. Sv.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 878-79.]

⁴³“καθίσταντες ἐλαλοῦμεν does not suggest a formal synagogue service (contrast 13:5, 14f.), though sitting was a natural posture for teaching.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 782.]

⁴⁴Λυδία, ας, ἦ (as a woman's name Horace, Odes 1, 8, 1; 1, 13, 1; 1, 25, 8; 3, 9, 6f; Martial, Epigr. 11, 21. In Gk. preserved in the form Λύδη; CIG 653; 6975; CIA III, 3261f) **Lydia**, a merchant fr. Thyatira in Lydia, who dealt in purple cloth; she was converted by Paul in Philippi, after having been σεβομένη τ. θεόν (s. σέβω 1b) **Ac 16:14, 40** (on her social status s. New Docs 2, 27f). BHHW II 1115; CHemer in New Docs 3, 53–55; LSchottroff, Let the Oppressed Go Free, tr. AKidder '93 ['91], 131–37.—M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 604.]

⁴⁵“THYATIRA (PLACE) [Gk Thyatira (Θυατιρα)]. City in Lydia, in W Asia Minor, at the junction of roads between Lydia and Mysia, on the plain of the river Lycus (modern Akhisar; 38°54'N, 27°50'E).

“Very few architectural remains have been found at the site, but inscriptions show an active civic and social life from the 2d century B.C. until the 3d century A.D. They mention shrines to Apollo Tyrimnaeus and Artemis Boreitene, to Helius, and to Hadrian; three gymnasiums full of statues; stoas and shops; and a portico of 100 columns in which the gerosia met.

“Thyatira was an important center of the wool trade. A guild of wool workers is mentioned in an inscription (IGRR 4: 1252), and others name several dyers and fullers in and around Thyatira, as well as the neighboring cities of Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colossae (Broughton 1938: 818–22).

“This recalls Lydia of Thyatira, who is known to us from Paul's visit to Philippi (Acts 16:14–15, 39) as a well-to-do householder engaged in the trade in luxury purple dye. (An inscription from Thessalonica also tells of a resident there from Thyatira, Menippus, who deals in purple dyes [Broughton 1938: 819]).

“Thyatira also appears as one of the seven churches of Asia Minor in the Apocalypse (Rev 1:11; 2:18, 24). The account mentions the blazing eyes and brass feet of Jesus, and this has been interpreted as an allusion to a cult statue of Apollo or Helius (both of whom appear on the city's coins).”

[John E. Stambaugh, “Thyatira (Place)” In vol. 6, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 546.]

⁴⁶“Her name corresponds to the land from which she came, for Thyatira was in a district called Lydia in Asia Minor.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; Page 313

(or dye): πορφυρόπωλις.⁴⁷ This was a luxury style of clothing material that very wealthy people wore in the first century world.⁴⁸ Spiritually she was σεβομένη τὸν θεόν, *worshipping God*.⁴⁹ In Acts the term virtually always designates a Gentile who is sympathetic to the Jewish religion. But it is to be distinguished from another term in Acts, προσήλυτος, proselyte, who has made a full conversion commitment to Judaism (2:11; 6:5). Thus Lydia, as a non-Jew, was meeting with other women, presumably Jewish, on the Jewish sabbath at this gathering place by the river. As she was listening to Paul speaking, Luke says that the Lord opened her heart to Paul's words: ἥς ὁ κύριος διήνοιξεν τὴν καρδίαν προσέχειν τοῖς λαλουμένοις ὑπὸ τοῦ Παύλου. Behind this picturesque expression lies a theological conviction of Luke expressed earlier in 13:48 regarding Gentile conversion at Pisidion Antioch:

Ἀκούοντα δὲ τὰ ἔθνη ἔχαιρον καὶ ἐδόξαζον τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου **καὶ ἐπίστευσαν ὅσοι ἦσαν τεταγμένοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον**.

When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and praised the word of the Lord; and as many as had been destined for eternal life became believers.

Responding positively to the message of the Gospel is not something individuals do on their own initiative. It is the presence of God working in the person's life that enables the individual to reach out to Christ in faith commitment. Clearly this was the case with Lydia.

The natural outward expression to a faith commitment to Christ is public baptism: ὡς δὲ ἐβαπτίσθη καὶ ὁ οἶκος αὐτῆς. What seems challenging to modern western highly individualistic society was entirely natural and normal in the collective oriented ancient society. Not only did she make a public commitment but her entire household did as well.⁵⁰ Since the depiction of her does not indicate she was married, this would include slaves and any older children present in the home. Probably, although it is not certain, the baptism took place a day or so after this meeting after Paul had opportunity to explain the Gospel to the members of her household.

Upon being baptized, Lydia opens up her home to this group of four traveling missionaries: παρεκάλεισεν λέγουσα· εἰ κεκρίκατέ με πιστὴν τῷ κυρίῳ εἶναι, εἰσελθόντες εἰς τὸν οἶκόν μου μένετε, *she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come and stay at my home."* Her skills of salesmanship evidently came to the surface as Luke concludes with καὶ παρεβιάσατο ἡμᾶς, *And she prevailed upon us*.

Luke does not mention here whether the other women responded as did Lydia, although by the end of their stay in Philippi, there is a group of disciples regularly meeting at her home (v. 40). Lydia and these others become the first converts of Paul and Silas in Europe. With a group of women a congregation is begun that will grow into one of the most important churches of Paul's entire ministry.

It is this aspect that Paul chose to reflect on in his letter to them written over a decade later from Rome:

Phil. 1:3-6. 3 I thank my God every time I remember you, 4 constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, 5 because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now. 6 I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ.

3 Εὐχαριστῶ τῷ θεῷ μου ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ μνηρίᾳ ὑμῶν 4 πάντοτε ἐν πάσῃ δεήσει μου ὑπὲρ πάντων ὑμῶν, μετὰ χαρᾶς τὴν δέησιν ποιούμενος, 5 ἐπὶ τῇ κοινωνίᾳ ὑμῶν εἰς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἀπὸ τῆς πρώτης ἡμέρας ἄχρι τοῦ νῦν, 6 πεποιθῶς αὐτὸ τοῦτο, ὅτι ὁ ἐναρξάμενος ἐν ὑμῖν ἔργον ἀγαθὸν ἐπιτελέσει ἄχρι ἡμέρας Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ.

London: Yale University Press, 2008), 585.]

⁴⁷“She sold wool or cloth that had been dyed purple. The noun porphyra, ‘purple,’ denoted actually the shellfish (*Murex trunculus*), from which one form of the ancient precious purple dye was obtained. The mollusks were harvested from the Mediterranean, and Tyre in Phoenicia was a very important place for the production of purple goods; its twice-dyed (*dibaphos*) Tyrian purple was an ancient luxury (see Josephus, J.W. 6.8.3 §390). Purple cloth, however, was also produced in other Greek cities in Asia Minor, among which was Thyatira, the Lydian town on the Lycus River, situated on the road from Pergamum to Sardis and called today Akhisar.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 585.]

⁴⁸One exceptional background reality was that Lydia had in Macedonia the legal status and rights to own and operate her own business. In virtually every other Roman province in the empire at that time, this would not have been possible. Salome, Alexander the Great's mother had won exceptional legal rights for women in Macedonia in the third century BCE, and the Romans acknowledged those rights once they took control of Macedonia. The other place was in Rome and was limited to very wealthy women of aristocratic status.

⁴⁹“The ptc. *sebomenos*, ‘worshipping,’ is often used as a substantive to denote pagans who sympathized with the Jewish religion (see NOTE on 10:2); Luke uses it in 13:50; 16:14; 17:4, 17; 18:7; 19:27 in that sense.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 520.]

⁵⁰Note the ‘household’ baptisms described in Acts: Cornelius (10:44-48); Lydia (16:15); Philippian jailer (16:34); Crispus (18:8). In no way can these passages be used to justify infant baptism, as some vainly attempt to do. In none of these instances is there implication of small children being present, and beginning with 10:44-48 it is made clear that baptism is based upon a faith commitment to Christ by the individual, not a proxy faith expression by a parent.

Phil. 4:15-16. 15 You Philippians indeed know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you alone. 16 For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me help for my needs more than once.

15 οἴδατε δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς, Φιλιππηῖοι, ὅτι ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, ὅτε ἐξῆλθον ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, οὐδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία ἐκοινωνήσεν εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήψεως εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς μόνοι, 16 ὅτι καὶ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ καὶ ἅπαξ καὶ δις εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μοι ἐπέμψατε.

This congregation would seek to remain faithful to Christ and to spreading the Gospel consistently over the subsequent years. Its beginning was solid and the commitments of the people were genuine. They caught a vision of the need of supporting the ministry of Paul and would do so repeatedly through the remainder of his life. That doesn't mean they became a perfect church, for two women leaders in the church, Euodia and Syntche, needed a gentle rebuke from Paul along with the assistance of another leader, possibly named Syzygus, to reconcile with one another (Phil. 4:2-3). Additionally a Clement is named as another leader in the church, and especially Epaphroditus (Phil. 2:25-30). Timothy as the youngest member of the missionary team would become endeared to the congregation over time as well (Phil. 2:19-24).

b) Exorcism of the slave girl, vv. 16-18: 16 Ἐγένετο⁵¹ δὲ πορευομένων ἡμῶν εἰς τὴν προσευχὴν παιδίσκην τινὰ ἔχουσαν πνεῦμα πύθωνα ὑπαντήσαι ἡμῖν, ἧτις ἐργασίαν πολλὴν παρεῖχεν τοῖς κυρίοις αὐτῆς μαντευομένη. 17 αὕτη κατακολουθοῦσα τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ ἡμῖν ἔκραζεν λέγουσα· οὗτοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι δοῦλοι τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου εἰσίν, οἵτινες καταγγέλλουσιν ὑμῖν ὁδὸν σωτηρίας. 18 τοῦτο δὲ ἐποίει ἐπὶ πολλὰς ἡμέρας. διαπονηθεὶς δὲ Παῦλος καὶ ἐπιστρέψας τῷ πνεύματι εἶπεν· παραγγέλλω σοι ἐν ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐξελεθεῖν ἀπ' αὐτῆς· καὶ ἐξῆλθεν αὐτῇ τῆ ὥρα.

Luke then indicates that during their stay in the city the missionary team made their way to the place of prayer: πορευομένων ἡμῶν εἰς τὴν προσευχὴν. This was where Paul first preached the Gospel to the women. The Jewish connections to the Gospel continued during the stay of these missionaries in the city. On one of those trips from Lydia's home to the place outside the city gate near the river, the missionaries encountered something very new. They were confronted face to face with the raw paganism of that world. A slave girl under demon possession confronted the group of missionaries.

Luke describes the unnamed girl as παιδίσκην τινὰ, a certain slave girl. Although the Greek word can mean simply 'little girl,' here it follows the consistent pattern in the NT of referring to a young female slave.⁵² More significantly she was ἔχουσαν πνεῦμα πύθωνα, possessing a spirit of divination. Here the crass paganism comes to the surface with the background of πύθωνα.⁵³ Some are convinced that Luke is alluding to the possible

⁵¹Καὶ ἐγένετο (or ἐγένετο δὲ) suggests the familiar Hebrew קָמַץ; the verb with the waw consecutive that would follow in Hebrew is represented in various ways. Thus:

4:5: ἐγένετο δὲ with accusative and infinitive, συναχθῆναι τοὺς ἄρχοντας ...

9:3: ἐγένετο with accusative and infinitive, αὐτὸν ἐγγίξειν

9:32: ἐγένετο δὲ with accusative and infinitive, Πέτρον κατελεθεῖν

9:43: ἐγένετο δὲ with the infinitive, μεῖναι

10:25: ὡς δὲ ἐγένετο with accusative and the genitive of the infinitive, τοῦ εἰσελεθεῖν τὸν Πέτρον

11:26: ἐγένετο with dative, καί, and infinitive, αὐτοῖς καὶ συναχθῆναι

14:1: ἐγένετο δὲ with accusative and infinitive, εἰσελεθεῖν αὐτοῦς

16:16: ἐγένετο δὲ with accusative and infinitive, παιδίσκην ὑπαντήσαι

19:1: ἐγένετο δὲ with accusative and infinitive, Παῦλον κατελεθεῖν (and ἐν τῷ with accusative and infinitive)

21:1: ὡς δὲ ἐγένετο with accusative and infinitive, ἀναχθῆναι ἡμᾶς

21:5: ὅτε δὲ ἐγένετο with accusative and infinitive, ἡμᾶς ἐξαρτίσαι

28:8: ἐγένετο δὲ with accusative and infinitive, τὸν πατέρα κατακεῖσθαι

[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), xlv.]

Luke's special way of introducing an episodic narrative, following a Hebrew way of thinking that is common in the Hebrew Bible.

⁵²παιδίσκη, ἡς, ἡ dim. of παῖς 'girl', in our lit. always of the slave class, *female slave* (so Hdt.+; pap [also Dssm. LO 167, 6=LAE 200, 18; others New Docs 2, 87f], LXX, TestAbr A; TestJob 21:2; Test12Patr, JosAs; Philo, Congr. Erud. Gr. 1=Gen 16:1 [PKatz, Philo's Bible '50, 36]; Jos., Ant. 18, 40; Ar. [Milne 74, 8]; Just., A I, 9, 4) **Mt 26:69; Mk 14:66, 69; Lk 22:56; Ac 12:13; 16:16**, 19 D; GJs 2:2f. ἡ π. ἡ θυρωρός the slave who kept the door **J 18:17**. W. παῖς (Lev 25:44; Dt 12:12, 18; TestAbr A 15 p. 95, 22 [Stone p. 38]; Pel-Leg. 12, 24f) **Lk 12:45**. W. δοῦλος (2 Esdr 2:65; Eccl 2:7; Ar.; w. δούλη JosAs 6:8) B 19:7; D 4:10; of God's female slaves (w. δοῦλοι 'male slaves') 1 Cl 60:2. In specific contrast to ἐλευθέρα of Hagar **Gal 4:22f** (Gen 16:1ff; Philo, Leg. All. 3, 244); w. a turn in the direction of a more profound sense vss. **30ab** (=Gen 21:10ab), **31**.—JWackernagel, Glotta 2, 1909, 1–8; 218f; 315.—Lob., Phryn. 239f. Schmidt, Syn. II 429f. DELG s.v. παῖς. M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 749-50.]

⁵³“Lit., ‘a little girl having a python spirit’ or ‘a python as spirit’ (*pneuma pythōna*). So read MSS P⁷⁴, α, A, B, C*, D*, 81, and 326; Page 315

ventriloquism meaning of the term. But the miracle narrative here is modeled after the exorcism narratives of the Synoptic Gospels and assumes the presence of the demonic. The contrast between Christianity's seeing this as a horrible destructive presence and paganism seeing it as a money-making machine is interesting. It's the difference in right and wrong attitudes toward other people.

The slave girls owners (note the plural) were making a lot of money off this girl: ἤτις ἐργασίαν πολλὴν παρείχεν τοῖς κυρίοις αὐτῆς μαντευομένη. Her πνεῦμα πύθωνα enabled her to be μαντευομένη, [fortune telling](#).⁵⁴ It seems as though Paul will have to deal with these extremes just about every where he travels. At Paphos on Cyprus he encountered Bar-Jesus the Jewish magician (τινὰ μάγον ψευδοπροφήτην) -- also named Elymas, Ἐλύμας, who was bringing in the money to himself by predicting the future for the Roman governor Sergius Paulus (Acts 13:6-12). Paul 'de-commissioned' him with a judgment miracle of temporary blindness. Now he will have to deal with this young slave girl.

It is interesting that what she screamed out to bystanders on the streets of Philippi was not incorrect: αὕτη κατακολουθοῦσα τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ ἡμῖν ἔκραζεν λέγουσα· οὗτοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι δοῦλοι τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου εἰσίν, οἵτινες καταγγέλλουσιν ὑμῖν ὁδὸν σωτηρίας, [While she followed Paul and us, she would cry out, "These men are slaves of the Most High God, who proclaim to you a way of salvation."](#) The scene painted by Luke is almost comical. These four men are walking along the streets and this slave girl is following behind them screaming out to everyone on the streets that these four men are indeed servants of God with a message of salvation. Some preachers I know would have been delighted to have such free publicity. But not the apostle Paul. Such actions associated the Gospel with the pagan superstition linked to the slave girl, and this was unsettling to Paul.

The first time she did this, the missionaries ignored her. But she was persistent for several days: τοῦτο δὲ ἐποίει ἐπὶ πολλὰς ἡμέρας. Each day as they made their way to prayer with their Jewish acquaintances, this girl showed up on the streets of the city with her irritating actions. Finally, Paul had had enough of this nonsense, and so he decided to put a stop to it: διαπονηθεὶς δὲ Παῦλος καὶ ἐπιστρέψας τῷ πνεύματι εἶπεν. Luke carefully notes that the girl over time brought Paul to the end of his wits: διαπονηθεὶς.⁵⁵ He turned around to face her and then spoke to her τῷ πνεύματι, [by the Spirit](#). This is a very similar pattern to the way he handled Elymas, the Jewish magician: Σαῦλος δὲ, ὁ καὶ Παῦλος, πλησθεὶς πνεύματος ἁγίου ἀτενίσας εἰς αὐτὸν εἶπεν, [But Saul, also known as Paul, filled with the Holy Spirit, looked intently at him and said](#). Luke stresses in both miracle narratives that the apostle did not speak from his own initiative, but rather under the leadership of God. It was not some special power that Paul had; instead, it was God's power that overcame the evil dominating these two individuals.



Paul spoke in the name of Christ to the girl: παραγγέλλω σοι ἐν ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐξελεθεῖν ἀπ' αὐτῆς, ["I order you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her."](#) Actually, he spoke directly to the demon in the girl. This but MSS P⁴⁵, C3, D1, E, Ψ, 33, 1739, and the Koinē text-tradition have rather *pneuma pythōnos*, 'the spirit of a python.' In Greek mythology, *Pythōn* was the serpent or dragon that guarded the Delphic oracle at the base of Mt. Parnassus; it was slain by Apollo. Later on, its name came to denote a 'spirit of divination,' or 'soothsaying,' and even of 'ventriloquism.' See Strabo, *Geography* 9.3.12; Plutarch, *De defectu oraculorum* 8 (= *Moralia* 414E); cf. A. J. Festugière, RB 54 (1947): 133." [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 586.]

⁵⁴**μαντεύομαι** (s. next entry; Hom. et al.; ins, LXX, Philo, Joseph.) mid. dep. aor.: impv. 2 sg. μάντευσαι 1 Km 28:8; inf. μαντεύεσθαι Ez 21:26; also w. pass. mng. for pass. forms; in our lit., as well as LXX, always in a context critical of the practitioner.

1. to practice divination, prophesy, divine, give an oracle (Hom. et al.; 1 Km 28:8=Jos., Ant. 6, 330; SibOr 4, 3; Ar., Tat., Ath., Iren.; Orig., C. Cels. 7, 4, 15 [of the Pythia]; Hippol., Ref. 4, 13, 2) of a soothsayer possessed by a ventriloquistic spirit **Ac 16:16**.

2. to consult a diviner, consult an oracle (Pind. et al.; Artem. 3, 20; Jos., C. Ap. 1, 306) of doubting Christians Hm 11:4.—M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 616.]

⁵⁵“διαπονηθεὶς: cf. 4:2. POxy 4:743:22, ἐγὼ ὄλος διαπονοῦμαι is rendered by the editor ‘I am quite upset’, but, especially in the aorist, the word suggests ‘I have reached the end of my patience’. Paul put up with the girl’s behaviour as long as he could but at length could stand it no longer. The suggestion (Kosmala 339) that Paul was angry because the use of ὁδός (v. 17) suggested Essenism rather than Christianity is fanciful and unconvincing; Paul was well aware of the Christian use of Way (9:2)—at least, the author of Acts thought that he was. Paul turned to the spirit, that is, to the girl possessed by the spirit; clearly Paul (Luke) understood the ventriloquial phenomenon to be the result of possession.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 787.]

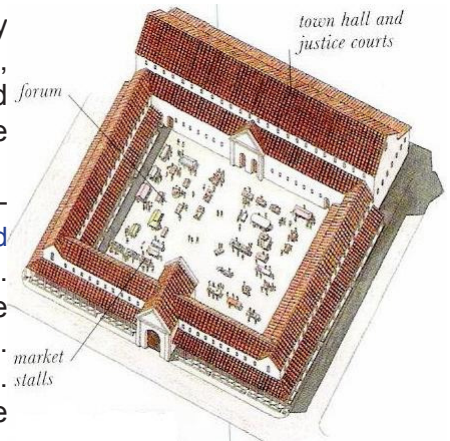
follows the pattern Jesus used in exorcisms; e.g., Luke 4:35: καὶ ἐπετίμησεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς λέγων· φημῶθητι καὶ ἔξελθε ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ. καὶ ῥίψαν αὐτὸν τὸ δαιμόνιον εἰς τὸ μέσον ἐξῆλθεν ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ μηδὲν βλάψαν αὐτόν, *But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” When the demon had thrown him down before them, he came out of him without having done him any harm.* At this command, the demon had no choice but to leave the girl: καὶ ἐξῆλθεν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ, *And it came out that very hour.* One should not assume that the slave girl then became a Christian. Luke provides no signal of this at all.

c) Violent reaction to the exorcism, vv. 19-24: 19 Ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ κύριοι αὐτῆς ὅτι ἐξῆλθεν ἡ ἐλπίς τῆς ἐργασίας αὐτῶν, ἐπιλαβόμενοι τὸν Παῦλον καὶ τὸν Σιλᾶν εἴλκυσαν εἰς τὴν ἀγορὰν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἄρχοντας 20 καὶ προσαγαγόντες αὐτοὺς τοῖς στρατηγοῖς εἶπαν· οὗτοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἐκταράσσουσιν ἡμῶν τὴν πόλιν, Ἰουδαῖοι ὑπάρχοντες, 21 καὶ καταγγέλλουσιν ἔθνη ἃ οὐκ ἔξεστιν ἡμῖν παραδέχεσθαι οὐδὲ ποιεῖν Ῥωμαίοις οὖσιν. 22 καὶ συνεπέστη ὁ ὄχλος κατ’ αὐτῶν καὶ οἱ στρατηγοὶ περιρῆξαντες αὐτῶν τὰ ἱμάτια ἐκέλευον ῥαβδίζειν, 23 πολλὰς τε ἐπιθέντες αὐτοῖς πληγὰς ἔβαλον εἰς φυλακὴν παραγγείλαντες τῷ δεσμοφύλακι ἀσφαλῶς τηρεῖν αὐτούς. 24 ὃς παραγγελίαν τοιαύτην λαβὼν ἔβαλεν αὐτούς εἰς τὴν ἐσωτέραν φυλακὴν καὶ τοὺς πόδας ἠσφαλίσατο αὐτῶν εἰς τὸ ξύλον.

When Paul silenced Elymas at Paphos, the Roman governor was astounded at the display of God’s power (Acts 13:12): τότε ἰδὼν ὁ ἀνθύπατος τὸ γεγονός ἐπίστευσεν ἐκπλησσομένης ἐπὶ τῇ διδασχῇ τοῦ κυρίου, *When the proconsul saw what had happened, he believed, for he was astonished at the teaching about the Lord.* Paul did not get the same response from the owners of the slave girl. What they saw was not the power of God, but the loss of their money-making machine: Ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ κύριοι αὐτῆς ὅτι ἐξῆλθεν ἡ ἐλπίς τῆς ἐργασίας αὐτῶν, *But when her owners saw that their hope of making money was gone.* It is interesting that this real motivation of anger against these Christian missionaries will not be brought up in the formal accusations these owners will make against Paul and Silas before the authorities (cf. v. 20-21). Thus the formal accusation is completely false. This experience will prepare Paul for another similar one a few years later at Ephesus, when Demetrius, the silversmith, creates a disturbance targeting Paul because the preaching of the Gospel was severely hurting his business (Acts 19:23-31).⁵⁶

They did not believe, as Sergius Paulus had, ἐπίστευσεν. Instead they took out their anger on Paul and Silas: ἐπιλαβόμενοι τὸν Παῦλον καὶ τὸν Σιλᾶν, *they seized Paul and Silas.* No mention is made of what happened to Luke and Timothy who were with them. Evidently they escaped the clutches of these angry men.

Paul and Silas were dragged by these owners into the marketplace before the local authorities: εἴλκυσαν εἰς τὴν ἀγορὰν ἐπὶ τοὺς ἄρχοντας, *dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities.* Two curious aspects arise here. Why take them into the marketplace? Who were the authorities? First, in the ancient world the ἀγορὰ was much more than a place to buy and sell goods. The life of a town pretty much revolved around the ἀγορὰ, in Latin, a *forum*. The Hellenistically designed city would spread out in grid patterns with the market place as the center block of the city.



The authorities are described in two ways. First they are called τοὺς ἄρχοντας, *the ruling ones* (v. 19) and second τοῖς στρατηγοῖς, *the magistrates* (v. 20). In Latin they were the *duumviri*.⁵⁷ Some uncertainty exists here but basically they were to administer the laws in the city as well as maintain peace and order.⁵⁸ In a Roman colony, such as Philippi, the Roman authorities maintained even closer watch over events in the city. The slave owners had no authority to punish Paul for making the demon leave their slave girl, and so they had to appeal to

⁵⁶Very fascinatingly Luke seems to have a particular interest in the connection between Christianity and money. He consistently sees the two as hostile to one another. Note Simon the magician 8:18-24; Elymas the magician 13:6-12; the slave girl’s owners at Philippi 16:19-24; the sons of Sceva and Demetrius at Ephesus 19:11-41. Interest in making money, and especially making money off of religion, was horrifying to Luke, and he portrays it in a very negative manner.

57 “In ancient Rome, *duumviri* (Lat *duumvir*, ‘one of the two men’; in plural originally *duoviri*, ‘the two men’) was the official style of two joint magistrates. Such pairs of magistrates were appointed at various periods of Roman history both in Rome itself and in the colonies and municipia.” [Duumviri,” Wikipedia.org]

⁵⁸“Lit., ‘leading them to the chief magistrates, they said.’ *Stratēgoi* usually means ‘military leaders,’ but now ‘chief magistrates,’ used of the official *duoviri* of Philippi, as they are named on inscriptions (PWSup 6.1071–1158). Cf. Josephus, Ant. 14.10.22 §247; 20.6.2 §131. They were responsible for maintaining peace and adjudicating legal and political cases, because they held magisterial *coercitio*, the power to inflict punishment, but they could not execute or flog a Roman citizen. See F. Haverfield, “On the *stratēgoi* of Philippi,” JTS 1 (1899–1900): 434–35; W. M. Ramsay, “The Philippians and Their Magistrates,” JTS 1 (1899–1900): 114–16.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 587.]

the local authorities to take action against these Christian missionaries.

The accusations made against Paul and Silas were blatantly false: οὔτοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἐκταράσσουσιν ἡμῶν τὴν πόλιν, Ἰουδαῖοι ὑπάρχοντες, καὶ καταγγέλλουσιν ἔθνη ἃ οὐκ ἔξεστιν ἡμῖν παραδέχεσθαι οὐδὲ ποιεῖν Ῥωμαίοις οὖσιν, “These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe.” First, οὔτοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἐκταράσσουσιν ἡμῶν τὴν πόλιν, *these men are disturbing our city*. This was totally a lie.⁵⁹ Paul and Silas did nothing to disrupt the peace of the city. It was the screaming of the slave girl that brought about some disruption. Either these slave owners didn’t know she was doing this, or else ignored her when she did. Second, is the racial accusation: Ἰουδαῖοι ὑπάρχοντες, *being Jews*. There was a racially motivated prejudice against Jewish people in most parts of the Roman empire, but it did not express itself often in overt violence against Jews.⁶⁰ Whether or not there was strong anti-Semitic attitudes in Philippi at this point in time is not known, but such a racial charge would play well into whipping up crowd support.⁶¹

The main accusation is contained in v. 21: καὶ καταγγέλλουσιν ἔθνη ἃ οὐκ ἔξεστιν ἡμῖν παραδέχεσθαι οὐδὲ ποιεῖν Ῥωμαίοις οὖσιν, *and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to adopt or observe*. This seems to be a veiled charge of proselyting, which did have some basis in Roman law. But the enforcement of Roman laws, especially outside the Italian peninsula was a best spotty and inconsistent. The status of Philippi as a Roman *κολωνία*, *colonia*, colony, probably helped these men to sound more ‘patriotic’ in this charge. One reason for prejudice against Jews was their monotheistic religious beliefs in a world of polytheism. What seems to be implied by Luke here is that these men both played the crowd and make charges without any knowledge of what Paul and the others had been preaching. They knew that these missionaries were Jewish, and assumed them to be advocating the Jewish religion.

The slave owners succeeded in getting the people in the market place whipped up in anger against Paul and Silas: καὶ συνεπέστη ὁ ὄχλος κατ’ αὐτῶν, *The crowd joined in attacking them*. It is interesting that legal charges against Paul and Silas seemed to always involve getting an angry mob whipped up in opposition to them. Note what would happen a little later at Thessalonica: *But the Jews became jealous, and with the help of some ruffians in the marketplaces they formed a mob and set the city in an uproar*, Ζηλώσαντες δὲ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ προσλαβόμενοι τῶν ἀγοραίων ἄνδρας τινὰς πονηροὺς καὶ ὄχλοποιήσαντες ἐθορύβουν τὴν πόλιν (17:5). And then again at Corinth:

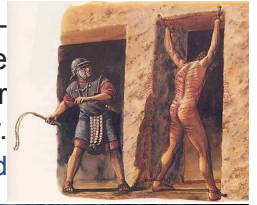
⁵⁹This would be the first time of several instances where a similar accusation would be leveled against them: 17:6, οἱ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἀναστατώσαντες; 24:5, κινουῦντα στάσεις.

⁶⁰“The remainder of the charge ‘so far from being anachronistic is positively archaic’ (Sherwin-White 82). It implies that it was illegitimate for Romans (members of a *colonia*) to adopt foreign customs, especially Jewish customs (v. 20). This was in accordance with the ancient principle that Roman citizens must practise the state cult, and might in addition practise only those cults that had been sanctioned by the Senate—*religiones licitae*. This principle was however relaxed in practice in the early Empire, and no objection was made to religions that did not offend against public order and public morality. Here however the ‘principle of incompatibility’ (Sherwin-White 80) is invoked (the dative Ῥωμαίοις οὖσιν is to be taken with ἔξεστιν ἡμῖν rather than with the infinitive: BDR § 410 n. 2). For this revival of a mostly forgotten principle there may have been two reasons (a) ‘It is perhaps characteristic that it is in an isolated Roman community in the Greek half of the Roman Empire that the basic principle of Roman ‘otherness’ should be affirmed, whereas in Italy the usual custom prevailed of treating alien cults on their merits’ (Sherwin-White 82). (b) The reference to the fact that Paul and Silas were Jews may be significant. Roman policy was to be tolerant towards Jews in the practice of their religion, but there is some ground for thinking that there was at this time a reaction against any kind of proselytization. See A. Momigliano, *Claudius* (ET 1934), 29–35. Sherwin-White (81) is right to question ‘whether there was any precise enactment against proselytism’; the evidence is not strong enough to affirm this. But the distinction between a national religion and attempts to turn this into a missionary religion is certainly in line with general imperial policy, and the juxtaposition of Ἰουδαῖοι ὑπάρχοντες (v. 20) and Ῥωμαίοις οὖσιν suggests that Paul and his companions were accused of illicit proselytizing. See the note on 18:2. This raises the question whether Paul did in fact present his Christian message as a version, the best version, the only true version, of Judaism. Acts sometimes if not always suggests that he did.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 790.]

⁶¹“The formulation of the accusation is instructive for understanding the Lukan apologetic—the charge is delivered in such a way that it can be denied. It is clear that Luke is not trying to recommend Christianity to the Romans as true Judaism; rather he distinctly sets Christianity apart from Judaism. Moreover, he does not enter into the Roman legal principles (e.g., Cicero *De leg.* 2.8.19: ‘No one shall have gods to himself, either new gods or alien gods, unless recognized by the State. Privately they shall worship those gods whose worship they have duly received from their ancestors’ [*Separatim nemo habessit deos neve novos neve advenas nisi publice adscitos privatim colunto quos rite a patribus cultos acceperint*]). From Cicero we can conclude that it was a punishable act for a Roman citizen to convert to Judaism. In actual fact, the application of criminal law was inconsistent. When necessary, the state could intervene in an individual case (as in the case of Flavius Clemens and of Domitilla concerning ‘atheism’; Dio Cass. 67.14).22” [Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel and Donald H. Juel, *Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 131-32.]

The city was filled with the confusion; and people rushed together to the theater, dragging with them Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians who were Paul's travel companions, καὶ ἐπλήσθη ἡ πόλις τῆς συγχύσεως, ὥρμησάν τε ὁμοθυμαδὸν εἰς τὸ θέατρον συναρπάσαντες Γάϊον καὶ Ἀρίσταρχον Μακεδόνας, συνεκδήμους Παύλου (19:29). Rational filing of charges of illegal activity, which was the intended process in Roman legal procedure, seemed not to be possible against Paul and his fellow missionaries, because their enemies had immoral personal agendas in mind rather than the peace of the city. Thus mob rule intended to force the magistrates to comply with the wishes of their opponents was the sought after alternative strategy.

But what happened next was, however, a blatant violation of Roman law and in reality put the magistrates into serious legal jeopardy. Following standard Roman procedure of interrogation,⁶² these legal authorities, οἱ στρατηγοὶ, had Paul and Silas stripped of their clothes and a severe beating of them was done by the police officers, τοὺς ῥαβδούχους (cf. v. 35): καὶ οἱ στρατηγοὶ περιρήξαντες αὐτῶν τὰ ἱμάτια ἐκέλευον ῥαβδίζειν, and the magistrates had them stripped of their clothing and ordered them to be beaten with rods.⁶³



Once this process was finished, Paul and Silas were handed over the jailor, δεσμοφύλακι, for safe keeping until the charges against them could be processed: πολλὰς τε ἐπιθέντες αὐτοῖς πληγὰς ἔβαλον εἰς φυλακὴν παραγγείλαντες τῷ δεσμοφύλακι ἀσφαλῶς τηρεῖν αὐτούς, After they had given them a severe flogging, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailor to keep them securely.⁶⁴ The traditional location of this prison is pictured here on the right, but one would not ever have wanted to spend a moment of time in an ancient Roman jail. The jailor then placed these prisoners in the innermost section of highest security: ὃς παραγγελίαν τοιαύτην λαβὼν ἔβαλεν αὐτούς εἰς τὴν ἐσωτέραν φυλακὴν καὶ τοὺς πόδας ἤσφαλίσασατο αὐτῶν εἰς τὸ ξύλον, Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. At that moment, the future was not bright for Paul and Silas. Most prisoners did not escape alive out of such situations. And I suspect the slave owners went home feeling quite proud of themselves, even though they had lost their money-making machine in the slave girl who could no longer serve their fortune-telling business. One wonders how much she may have suffered at their hands in anger by her masters over what had happened.



ἔβαλεν αὐτούς εἰς τὴν ἐσωτέραν φυλακὴν καὶ τοὺς πόδας ἤσφαλίσασατο αὐτῶν εἰς τὸ ξύλον, Following these instructions, he put them in the innermost cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. At that moment, the future was not bright for Paul and Silas. Most prisoners did not escape alive out of such situations. And I suspect the slave owners went home feeling quite proud of themselves, even though they had lost their money-making machine in the slave girl who could no longer serve their fortune-telling business. One wonders how much she may have suffered at their hands in anger by her masters over what had happened.

d) Miraculous deliverance from jail, vv. 25-34: 25 Κατὰ δὲ τὸ μεσονύκτιον Παῦλος καὶ Σιλᾶς προσευχόμενοι ὕμνουν τὸν θεόν, ἐπηκροῶντο δὲ αὐτῶν οἱ δέσμιοι. 26 ἄφνω δὲ σεισμός ἐγένετο μέγας ὥστε σαλευθῆναι τὰ θεμέλια τοῦ δεσμωτηρίου· ἠνεώχθησαν δὲ παραχρῆμα αἱ θύραι πᾶσαι καὶ πάντων τὰ δεσμὰ ἀνέθη. 27 ἔξυπνος δὲ γενόμενος ὁ δεσμοφύλαξ καὶ ἰδὼν ἀνεωγμένας τὰς θύρας τῆς φυλακῆς, σπασάμενος [τὴν] μάχαιραν ἤμελλεν ἑαυτὸν ἀναιρεῖν νομίζων ἐκπεφευγέναι τοὺς δεσμίους. 28 ἐφώνησεν δὲ μεγάλη φωνὴ [ὁ] Παῦλος λέγων· μηδὲν πράξης σεαυτῷ κακόν, ἅπαντες γὰρ ἔσμεν ἐνθάδε. 29 αἰτήσας δὲ φῶτα εἰσεπήδησεν καὶ ἔντρομος γενόμενος προσέτεπεν τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ [τῷ] Σιλᾶ 30 καὶ προαγαγὼν αὐτούς ἔξω ἔφη· κύριοι, τί με δεῖ ποιεῖν ἵνα σωθῶ; 31 οἱ δὲ εἶπαν· πίστευσον ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ σωθήσῃ σὺ καὶ ὁ οἶκός σου. 32 καὶ ἐλάλησεν αὐτῷ τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ. 33 καὶ παραλαβὼν αὐτούς ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ τῆς νυκτὸς ἔλουσεν ἀπὸ τῶν πληγῶν, καὶ ἐβαπτίσθη αὐτὸς καὶ οἱ αὐτοῦ πάντες παραχρῆμα, 34 ἀναγαγὼν τε αὐτούς εἰς τὸν οἶκον παρέθηκεν τράπεζαν καὶ ἠγαλλιάσατο πανοικεῖ πεπιστευκῶς τῷ θεῷ.

What this jailor did not realize was that these two prisoners would be instruments of God to change his life forever. The slave owners charged these missionaries with trying to convert Romans to their religion. But God in His miraculous working would convert one of the governmental officers to Christianity through these missionaries. What a turn of events!

The narrative begins with the two missionaries not acting like regular prisoners. These prisoners were chanting psalms to God as prayers at midnight in the prison, most likely in Hebrew: Κατὰ δὲ τὸ μεσονύκτιον Παῦλος καὶ Σιλᾶς προσευχόμενοι ὕμνουν τὸν θεόν.⁶⁵ The modal participle προσευχόμενοι defines the nature of

⁶²The standard procedure followed by Romans in handling suspects for illegal activity was to first administer a severe beating of the prisoner, and then ask him questions. The reasoning was that only then could they come close to getting the truth out of a prisoner because he would be too scared to lie to them.

⁶³This is one of the three times Paul will be so flogged: **Three times I was beaten with rods**, τρις ἐρραβδίσθη (2 Cor. 11:25a).

⁶⁴Prisons in the Roman empire were jails used only as holding cells until the legal process against the prisoner could be completed. Roman legal processes made no provision for a sentence of imprisonment. The legal process would be completed at the whim of the local magistrates or governors. Bob Fraser in "Prisons in Paul's World" (<http://www.mpumc.org/uploads/file/Prisons%20in%20Paul.pdf>) has a graphic and depressing description of being jailed in the Roman empire.

⁶⁵ Quite interestingly in the background lies both a Greek and a Jewish tradition of singing and writing poems while in prison: Page 319

the verb action ὕμνου⁶⁶ especially with τὸν θεόν as the object.⁶⁷ Here is where modern linguistic patterns hinder understanding of ancient patterns. The rhythmical manner in which both ancient Hebrew and Greek (although very different patterns) were spoken greatly diminished the tonal distance between speaking and singing. Add to that the grammar construction here, and the concept being expressed is not praying and singing, but praying through chanting a psalm. Although not so stated in the text, the likelihood is that they were singing some of the psalms affirming God's care of His people in times of distress. This would be quite appropriate to the situation of bleeding from the flogging, having their feet locked in stocks, and it in the middle of the night. Their faith in God and His watch care over His people would be reaffirmed by these songs of prayer and praise to God.



Alleged Place of Paul's Prison in Philippi

Equally fascinating is that the other prisoners were listening to them: ἐπηκροῶντο δὲ αὐτῶν οἱ δέσμοιοι.⁶⁸ The genitive object αὐτῶν, *them*, would suggest in usage with the verb ἐπακροάομαι some level of understanding of what was being said. This may signal that the missionaries were using a Greek musical pattern and repeating the LXX translations of the psalms rather than the Hebrew which they would have learned from childhood and been more accustomed to have used in the synagogue gatherings. But even if they were chanting in Hebrew rather than Greek, such unusual sounds would have raised the curiosity of the other prisoners. It would have been clear in this setting that this was a religious song of some kind being offered up to the God these two men worshipped.

Without warning an earthquake took place: ἄφνω δὲ σεισμὸς ἐγένετο μέγας. Although it was a 'natural' event, it was also unique in that God caused it to happen and to be targeted on the prison. To be sure, earthquakes are still common in that region of Macedonia even today, but this one was special. For Luke this is another of his parallels between Peter and Paul. Just as Peter was miraculously delivered from prison in Jerusalem by an earthquake (Acts 12:6-11), now Paul is also delivered by a miraculous earthquake in Philippi. Both the intensity and the miraculous nature of the earthquake are stressed by the details that Luke gives: ὥστε σαλευθῆναι τὰ θεμέλια τοῦ δεσμητηρίου· ἠνεώχθησαν δὲ παραχρῆμα αἱ θύραι πᾶσαι καὶ πάντων τὰ δεσμὰ ἀνέθη, so violent that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were

The midnight hour is part of the "numinous" mood. Singing hymns of praise is a common motif of the δεσμόλυτα, "prison release";²⁶ the imprisoned Bacchae praise Dionysus, Epictetus 2.6.26: "And then we shall be emulating Socrates, when we are able to write paeans in prison" (καὶ τότε ἐσόμεθα ζηλωταὶ Σωκράτους, ὅταν ἐν φυλακῇ δυνώμεθα παιᾶνας γράφειν); T. Jos. 8.5: "When I was in fetters, the Egyptian woman was overtaken with grief. She came and heard the report how I gave thanks to the Lord and sang praise in the house of darkness" (καὶ ὡς ἡμεν ἐν τοῖς δεσμοῖς, ἡ Αἰγυπτία συνείχετο ἀπὸ τῆς λύπης, καὶ ἐπηκροῶτό μου πῶς ὕμνου κύριον ἐν οἴκῳ σκότους). The miracle is the heavenly response to the joyous confession of faith.

[Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel and Donald H. Juel, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 132.]

^{66c} ὕμνέω (ὕμνος) impf. ὕμνου; fut. ὕμνήσω; 1 aor. ὕμνησα **to sing a song in a cultic setting**, esp. of praise and celebration

1. trans. **sing in praise to, sing in praise of** (Hes., Hdt.+; ins; PGM 13, 628; 637; 21, 19; LXX, TestSol, ApcMos, ApcZeph, SibOr 5, 151; Just., D. 105, 1) sing the praise of, sing a song of praise to τινά someone God (Xenophanes [VI B.C.] 1, 13 Diehl3 θεόν; X., Cyr. 8, 1, 23 θεόν; Dio Chrys. 80 [30], 26; Alciphron 4, 18, 16 Διόνυσον; SIG 662, 9–12 τοὺς θεοὺς ὕμνησεν; LXX; ApcMos 17 τὸν θεόν; ApcZeph; Philo, Leg. All. 2, 102 al.; Jos., Ant. 7, 80; 11, 80 τὸν θεόν; Just., D. 106, 1; Hippol., Ref. 9, 21, 3; Iren. 1, 2, 6 [Harv. I 23, 1] τὸν προπάτορα) **Ac 16:25; Hb 2:12** (Ps 21:23).

2. intr. **sing (a hymn)** (Ps 64:14; 1 Macc 13:47; En 27:5; TestJob 14:2; TestJos 8:5a; Jos., Ant. 12, 349) ὕμνησαντες after they had sung the hymn (of the second part of the Hallel [Pss 113–118 Mt], sung at the close of the Passover meal) **Mt 26:30** (EBammel, JTS 24, '73, 189 [P64]).—DELG s.v. ὕμνος, M-M. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1027.]

^{67c}The non-biblical usage suggests the celebration of some god or hero, but determinative for Acts is the use of ὕμνος along with ψαλμός for the Psalms of David (cf. especially 2 Chron. 7:6, ἐν ὕμνοις Δαυὶδ, בְּהַלֵּל דָּוִד). Paul and Silas were singing OT Psalms or new compositions on the same lines (cf. the Qumran הַרְיִית; also 5:41)." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 793.]

^{68c}The rare word *epakroaomai* (from Plato on, not in the LXX) means *to listen to* (Acts 16:25). The related noun *akroatēs*, *listener* (from the 5th cent. B.C.; also Isa. 3:3; Sir. 3:29 LXX) occurs in Rom. 2:13 and Jas. 1:22, 23, 25, where the hearer of the law (or of the word) is contrasted with the doer." [W. Mundle, "Hear, Obey" In vol. 2, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Lothar Coenen, Erich Beyreuther and Hans Bietenhard (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), 175-76.]

unfastened. These aspects stress the miraculous nature of the event, since such would not have happened ordinarily in an earthquake. Add to that the fact that the authorities the next morning did not know anything about the earthquake happening at the jail (cf. v. 35).

The heart of the miracle comes in vv. 27-29, where the jailor is shocked to learn that no prisoner has escaped and that everyone is okay. He recognizes that this was no natural event. Instead, the God that Paul and Silas served and was why they were in jail to begin with had done this miraculous thing in behalf of these two men.⁶⁹ His move to commit suicide was prompted by Roman regulations that made the jailor responsible for keeping his prisoners locked up. Should any escape, he would be liable for the same penalty they were facing. And most likely he would then have been executed by the authorities for dereliction of duty.

This realization prompts the jailer to make a plea to Paul and Silas: 29 αἰτήσας δὲ φῶτα εἰσεπήδησεν καὶ ἔντρομος γενόμενος προσέπεσεν τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ [τῷ] Σιλᾷ 30 καὶ προαγαγὼν αὐτοὺς ἔξω ἔφη· κύριοι, τί με δεῖ ποιεῖν ἵνα σωθῶ; 29 The jailer called for lights, and rushing in, he fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 Then he brought them outside and said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”⁷⁰ His question echoes that of the Jewish pilgrims in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost in response to Peter’s sermon: τί ποιήσωμεν, ἄνδρες ἀδελφοί; “Brothers, what should we do?” (Acts 2:37).⁷¹

Paul and Silas provided a quick and clear response to the question: οἱ δὲ εἶπαν· πιστεύσον ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν καὶ σωθήσῃ σὺ καὶ ὁ οἶκός σου. They answered, “Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” Deliverance is not physical deliverance from harm, but spiritual deliverance from the penalty and fate of our sinfulness. And that deliverance comes only through faith commitment to Christ. Luke makes it clear that the jailor along with the members of his household -- slaves and older children -- clearly understand the details before making their confession of faith: καὶ ἐλάλησαν αὐτῷ τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου σὺν πᾶσιν τοῖς ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ. They spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. This didn’t take long for Luke indicates that within the hour the missionaries were satisfied that the jailor and his household were sincere in their commitment to Christ: καὶ παραλαβὼν αὐτοὺς ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ τῆς νυκτὸς ἔλουσεν ἀπὸ τῶν πληγῶν, καὶ ἐβαπτίσθη αὐτὸς καὶ οἱ αὐτοῦ πάντες παραχρῆμα, At the same hour of the night he took them and washed their wounds; then he and his entire family were baptized without delay. What a night! It began in a routine manner for the jailor, but by morning both his life and that of his family had been changed forever. The jailor lived in quarters connected to the jail and had slaves who helped in run the jail. By morning’s sunup this was a very different place with a dramatically different atmosphere: ἀναγαγὼν τε αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν οἶκον παρέθηκεν τράπεζαν καὶ ἡγαλλιάσατο πανοικεῖ πεπιστευκῶς τῷ θεῷ, He brought them up into the house and set food before them; and he and his entire household rejoiced that he had become a believer in God. It would be interesting to know how Lydia and the growing house church meeting in her home responded with they learned about what had happened. Without question they knew that Paul and Silas had been arrested and jailed. I suspect prayers had been taking place all that afternoon and evening for these two missionaries in another part of the city by this group of believers.

Conclusion, vv. 35-40: 35 Ἡμέρας δὲ γενομένης ἀπέστειλαν οἱ στρατηγοὶ τοὺς ῥαβδούχους λέγοντες· ἀπόλυσον τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐκείνους. 36 ἀπήγγειλεν δὲ ὁ δεσμοφύλαξ τοὺς λόγους [τούτους] πρὸς τὸν Παῦλον ὅτι ἀπέσταλκαν οἱ στρατηγοὶ ἵνα ἀπολυθῆτε· νῦν οὖν ἐξελθόντες πορεύεσθε ἐν εἰρήνῃ. 37 ὁ δὲ Παῦλος ἔφη πρὸς αὐτοῦς· δεῖραντες ἡμᾶς

⁶⁹Perhaps in the jailor’s background also was the major mythical tradition of the Greek god Dionysus whose capacity to liberate himself and his followers from bonds was widely known:

The primary context in the Greco-Roman world was the cult of Dionysus.⁸⁷ His capacity to liberate himself and his followers from bonds was a basic symbol of his role as the god who freed women and men from the burdens, restrictions, and boredom of life. In the competitive religious environment of the Hellenistic and Roman eras, other religious movements appropriated this theme, for the vivid picture of shattering barriers was too potent to leave in the sole possession of the devotees of Dionysus.⁸⁸ Among these competitors was Judaism. Fragment 3 of Artapanus represents the competitive, “syncretistic” manifestation of the prison break, while 3 Maccabees is arguably a direct confrontation with the cult of Dionysus.⁸⁹

[Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary on the Book of Acts*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 409-10.]

⁷⁰When the jailer fell down in front of the two missionaries in order to pose his question, Paul did not see this as misguided worship as he and Barnabas had of the people in Lystra who thought the men were gods visiting them (cf. 14:11-13). This experience parallels that of Peter when he stepped into the room where Cornelius and his friends had gathered (Acts 10:25). This was a display of deep respect for the religious insight expected from these representatives of Christ.

⁷¹“The Roman warden’s question echoes that of Jerusalem Jews on the first Christian Pentecost (2:37). It is the classic question of everyone on the threshold of faith; it is the beginning of a response to the gospel. What a Roman would have meant by such a question about being “saved” is hard to say; but in the Lucan story he is made to query an effect of the Christ-event.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 589.]

δημοσίᾳ ἀκατακρίτους, ἀνθρώπους Ῥωμαίους ὑπάρχοντας, ἔβαλαν εἰς φυλακὴν, καὶ νῦν λάθρα ἡμᾶς ἐκβάλλουσιν; οὐ γάρ, ἀλλὰ ἐλθόντες αὐτοὶ ἡμᾶς ἐξαγαγέτωσαν. 38 ἀπήγγειλαν δὲ τοῖς στρατηγοῖς οἱ ῥαβδοῦχοι τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα. ἐφοβήθησαν δὲ ἀκούσαντες ὅτι Ῥωμαῖοί εἰσιν, 39 καὶ ἐλθόντες παρεκάλεσαν αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐξαγαγόντες ἠρώτων ἀπελθεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς πόλεως. 40 ἐξελθόντες δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς φυλακῆς εἰσηλθον πρὸς τὴν Λυδίαν καὶ ἰδόντες παρεκάλεσαν τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ ἐξήλθαν.

With sun up the next morning came a message from the authorities to the jailer: 'Ἡμέρας δὲ γενομένης ἀπέστειλαν οἱ στρατηγοὶ τοὺς ῥαβδούχους λέγοντες· ἀπόλυσον τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐκείνους, *When morning came, the magistrates sent the police, saying, "Let those men go."* At this point in the narrative we have three different types of government officials on the table: **the magistrates** labeled both τοὺς ἄρχοντας (v. 19) and τοῖς στρατηγοῖς (v. 20) / οἱ στρατηγοὶ (v. 35); **the police**, τοὺς ῥαβδούχους (v. 35); and **the jailer**, τῷ δεσμοφύλακι (v. 23) / ὁ δεσμοφύλαξ (vv. 27, 36). What we are seeing here is something not often found in the provinces of the empire where local officials had charge of law enforcement.⁷² Evidently the Roman colony status of Philippi brought about some organizational structure to law enforcement not usually found elsewhere in the empire.

The magistrates clearly had 'played politics' with Paul and Silas. Their flogging of these two missionaries along with putting them in jail over night appeased the slave owners and the angry crowd. But the magistrates evidently realized that Paul and Silas had not committed any crime deserving punishment.

When the jailor reported this news to Paul, the apostle had a surprising and alarming reply:

36 ἀπήγγειλεν δὲ ὁ δεσμοφύλαξ τοὺς λόγους [τούτους] πρὸς τὸν Παῦλον ὅτι ἀπέσταλκαν οἱ στρατηγοὶ ἵνα ἀπολυθῆτε· νῦν οὖν ἐξελθόντες πορεύεσθε ἐν εἰρήνῃ. 37 ὁ δὲ Παῦλος ἔφη πρὸς αὐτούς· δείραντες ἡμᾶς δημοσίᾳ ἀκατακρίτους, ἀνθρώπους Ῥωμαίους ὑπάρχοντας, ἔβαλαν εἰς φυλακὴν, καὶ νῦν λάθρα ἡμᾶς ἐκβάλλουσιν; οὐ γάρ, ἀλλὰ ἐλθόντες αὐτοὶ ἡμᾶς ἐξαγαγέτωσαν. 38 ἀπήγγειλαν δὲ τοῖς στρατηγοῖς οἱ ῥαβδοῦχοι τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα. ἐφοβήθησαν δὲ ἀκούσαντες ὅτι Ῥωμαῖοί εἰσιν,

36 And the jailer reported the message to Paul, saying, "The magistrates sent word to let you go; therefore come out now and go in peace." 37 But Paul replied, "They have beaten us in public, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they going to discharge us in secret? Certainly not! Let them come and take us out themselves." 38 The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens;

Instead of accepting the news of the release and quietly leaving town, Paul raised the red flag of Roman citizenship for both himself and for Silas. When the police reported this back to the magistrates, considerable fear (ἐφοβήθησαν) gripped these men. As Roman citizens this kind of public shaming of the two men was a serious violation of the law, and their citizenship gave them legal rights of redress that could have brought about the execution of the magistrates.⁷³ Paul put 'the fear of God' into these magistrates with the demand that they come

⁷²“In most of the Empire, the Army, rather than a dedicated police organization, provided security. Local watchmen were hired by cities to provide some extra security. Magistrates such as *procurators fiscal* and *quaestors* investigated crimes. There was no concept of public prosecution, so victims of crime or their families had to organize and manage the prosecution themselves. Under the reign of Augustus, when the capital had grown to almost one million inhabitants, 14 wards were created; the wards were protected by seven squads of 1,000 men called ‘vigiles’, who acted as firemen and nightwatchmen. Their duties included apprehending thieves and robbers and capturing runaway slaves. The vigiles were supported by the *Urban Cohorts* who acted as a heavy duty anti-riot force and the even the *Praetorian Guard* if necessary.” [“Police: Roman Empire,” *Wikipedia.org*]

This pattern stood in contrast to ancient Greece where “publicly owned slaves were used by magistrates as police. In Athens, a group of 300 Scythian slaves (the ῥαβδοῦχοι, ‘rod-bearers’) was used to guard public meetings to keep order and for crowd control, and also assisted with dealing with criminals, handling prisoners, and making arrests. Other duties associated with modern policing, such as investigating crimes, were left to the citizens themselves” [“Police: Ancient Greece,” *Wikipedia.org*]

The attitude toward crime in the empire different substantially from modern concepts. “For the most part, crime was viewed as a private matter in Ancient Greece and Rome. Even with offenses as serious as murder, justice was the prerogative of the victim’s family and private war or vendetta the means of protection against criminality.” [“History of criminal justice: Pre-modern Europe,” *Wikipedia.org*]

⁷³“The *Lex Porcia* forbade this: *Porcia tamen lex sola pro tergo civium lata videtur: quod gravi poena, si quis verberasset necassetve civem romanum, sanxit* (Livy 10:9:4). This is eloquently taken up by Cicero, In Verrem 2:5:66 (170), *Facinus est vinciri [or vincere] civem Romanum, scelus verberari [or verberare], prope parricidium necari [or necare]*. Cicero, of course, knew that what ought not to happen sometimes did happen. In the same oration (2:5:62(162)) he writes, *Caedabatur virgis in medio foro Mesanae civis Romanus, iudices, cum interea nullus gemitus, nulla vox alia istius miseri, inter dolorem crepitumque plagarum audiebatur nisi haec, ‘Civis Romanus sum’*. This incident however confirms that the victim knew that to claim citizenship ought to have delivered him from his suffering. Cf. further 2:5:57(147), and see Sherwin-White (58f.).

“Paul stresses the enormity of the offence committed by the magistrates by adding δημοσίᾳ (publicly; cf. δημοσίᾳ τεθνᾶναι, to die at the hands of the public executioner, Demosthenes 45:81(1126)). They had been publicly insulted and disgraced by the punishment. On the theme of honour and shame see Rapske (Book of Acts 3:303f.) They were also ἀκατακρίτους—uncondemned because there had been no trial (*re incognita*). Cf. Rackham (291). This was a further point well understood in Roman law and custom. Tacitus, *Histories* 1:6, condemns the execution by Galba of Congonius Varro and Petronius Turpilianus: *‘inauditi atque indefensi tamquam innocentes*

and personally escort the missionaries to the edge of the city. This prompted a quick trip from their market place office to the jail in order to personally apologize for this tragic mistake: καὶ ἐλθόντες παρεκάλεσαν αὐτοὺς. The magistrates then escorted the missionaries to the edge of the city repeated asking them to leave the city: καὶ ἐξαγαγόντες ἡρώτων ἀπελθεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς πόλεως. This seems to be what Luke was saying, but ancient manuscript copyists were puzzled by what ἐξαγαγόντες, leading them out, implied, since according to v. 30 they were outside the jail already.⁷⁴ The uncertainty about the movement of the individuals in this part of the narrative continues. The authorities evidently did escort the missionaries some distance away from the prison.

But before leaving the city completely Paul and Silas went to Lydia's home elsewhere in Philippi to let them know that they were okay: ἐξεληθόντες δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς φυλακῆς εἰσήλθον πρὸς τὴν Λυδίαν καὶ ἰδόντες παρεκάλεσαν τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ ἐξήλθαν, *After leaving the prison they went to Lydia's home; and when they had seen and encouraged the brothers and sisters there, they departed.* This pattern follows what Peter did after his miraculous deliverance from prison in Jerusalem, when he went straight to Mary's home in the city to let the believers who were praying for him know that he was okay (Acts 12:6-17). The prison guards were not so fortunate there since

perierant. Augustine (*De Civitate Dei* 1:19) bases an argument against suicide on the principle: *'Vos appello, leges iudicesque Romani. Nempe post perpetrata facinora nec quemquam scelestum indemnatum inpune voluistis occidi.'* See also Cicero, *In Verrem* 2:1:9(25): *'Causa cognita multi possunt absolvi, incognita quidem condemnari nemo potest.'* D (sy) add (before δειραντες) ἀναίτιους, *innocent, guiltless*; this is not appropriate in the same clause as ἀκατακρίτους.

“The most serious point (in the view of the magistrates), however, is that Paul and Silas are Romans; that is, citizens, enjoying by right a considerable measure of immunity and having the power to seek legal redress. For Paul's claim to be a Roman citizen, and for the means by which he acquired the citizenship, see 22:25, 28; in the present passage the same claim is made for Silas. On the citizenship as it relates to Paul in Acts see especially H. J. Cadbury in *Begs.* 5:297–338 and Sherwin-White (55–72, 144–54). It is not easy to answer the question how he could have demonstrated his citizenship, especially after his clothes, with no doubt any pockets they may have contained, had been torn off (v. 22). Whether in any circumstances he would have had a certificate to show is uncertain (Sherwin-White 148f.); he could hardly from the prison in Philippi ask for the register in Tarsus to be consulted. It may be that the bare claim would be enough to frighten the magistrates on the ground that though it might be false it could possibly be true and that if it were they could be involved in expensive legal proceedings with an unfortunate outcome. There is no reference to the citizenship in any extant epistle of Paul's, and we know (2 Cor. 11:23, 25) that he received a Roman flogging three times and was often imprisoned. These facts do not prove that Paul did not possess the citizenship.”

[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 801-02.]

^{74c}In this verse the reading of D (partially supported by 614 pc sy^{h**}) is so different from that of other MSS as to call for separate commentary. There is nothing intrinsically impossible or indeed difficult in it and it is of some importance as an outstanding example of a place where the Western text presents a different picture from that of the Old Uncials—different, however, not in essentials but in additional detail. Which is to be preferred, and whether it is right to prefer one as more ‘original’ than the other, are questions that can be answered only as part of a general discussion of the two texts. See I:20–29 and Introduction, pp. xix–xxiii; the view taken here is that the Western text arose at a time and place in which the text was not regarded as having full canonical authority and was therefore open to free modification. The text of D is

καὶ παραγενόμενοι μετὰ φίλων πολλῶν εἰς τὴν φυλακὴν παρεκάλεσαν αὐτοὺς ἐξελθεῖν εἰπόντες· Ἦγνοήσαμεν τὰ καθ' ὑμᾶς ὅτι ἐστὲ ἄνδρες δίκαιοι. καὶ ἐξαγαγόντες παρεκάλεσαν αὐτοὺς λέγοντες· Ἐκ τῆς πόλεως ταύτης ἐξέλθατε μήποτε ἄλλιν συστραφῶσιν ἡμεῖν ἐπικράζοντες καθ' ὑμῶν.

See *Ropes* in *Begs.* 3:160f.; Clark 107, 365f.

“The στρατηγοὶ appear at the prison with many friends, who, they presumably hope, will add weight to their request, Their presence certainly adds to the dignity of Paul and Silas. It is here clearly stated (cf. the note above) that the preachers are back in prison. παρεκάλεσαν αὐτοὺς may be a gloss introduced from the other text, but here it has an explicit complement, whereas ἡρώτων ἀπελθεῖν is wanting. εἰπόντες is an aorist participle of coincident action. Direct speech follows.

“Τὸ Ἦγνοήσαμεν τὰ καθ' ὑμᾶς ὅτι ἐστὲ ἄνδρες δίκαιοι there is no parallel in the Old Uncial text. Turner (*M.* 3:15) translates, ‘We acted amiss at your trial in court’, adding in brackets the word πρᾶγμα, presumably to show that this is how he understands τὰ καθ' ὑμᾶς. This is fair enough, though since there was no trial in court your case (in a legal sense) would be better (cf. 25:14). But the rendering we acted amiss is questionable. It is true that ἄγνοεῖν, used absolutely, can mean ‘go wrong, make a false step ... to be ignorant of what is right, act amiss’ (LS 12, s.v. II). But (a) in the NT the word means almost always not to know, not to understand (Heb. 5:2; 2 Pet. 2:12 are unlikely and in any case unimportant exceptions); (b) if the word is taken in Turner's way it is not easy to explain the following clause, ὅτι κτλ.; (c) d has ignoramus. It is better to translate, We failed to understand, in reference to your affair, that you were innocent (δίκαιοι) men. The next words bring the Western text into line with other authorities, but fresh material follows, again in direct speech, and the magistrates explain why they are anxious that Paul and Silas should leave. It is μήποτε ἄλλιν συστραφῶσιν ἡμῖν. They are concerned for their own safety as well as that of the prisoners. Those who brought the initial complaint may again gather together, with aggressive intent; cf. the use of the cognate συστροφή at 19:40; 23:12. They would indeed be shouting against Paul and Silas (καθ' ὑμῶν), but aggressively urging the magistrates to take action against them.”

[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 803-05.]

they wound up being executed for letting Peter escape (12:18-19). Luke says that upon seeing the believers in her home they gave words of encouragement to the group before departing the city for Thessalonica.

A curious question arises as to why Paul asserted his rights as a Roman citizen here. In 2 Cor. 11:23, 25 Paul clearly indicates that over his ministry he suffered several imprisonments and three beatings completely in violation of his Roman citizenship. According to Acts he claimed this right only twice: in Philippi after being flogged and in Jerusalem later on while on the verge of being flogged by Roman soldiers (Acts 22:25). No explicit reason is stated by Luke, but the narrative details seem to point to Paul taking this action in order to create enough fright in the city magistrates so that they would think twice about harassing the group of believers left behind in the city. Had he been solely interested in avoiding the pain of the flogging himself, he would have raised the issue before the magistrates ordered his flogging while at their offices in the marketplace the evening before. But by raising the issue post facto these city officials would think twice before causing the newly formed community of believers any trouble.

When Paul later writes to the Thessalonians in 1 Thess. 2:2, he will refer to this episode in Philippi as προπαθόντες καὶ ὑβρισθέντες καθὼς οἴδατε, ἐν Φιλιππίοις, *having already suffered and been shamefully mistreated, just as you know, in Philippi.*⁷⁵ Years later in Paul's letter to the Philippians from Roman imprisonment, he will remind them of what they had witnessed first hand in his suffering: 29 ὅτι ὑμῖν ἐχαρίσθη τὸ ὑπὲρ Χριστοῦ, οὐ μόνον τὸ εἰς αὐτὸν πιστεῦν ἀλλὰ καὶ τὸ ὑπὲρ αὐτοῦ πάσχειν, 30 τὸν αὐτὸν ἀγῶνα ἔχοντες, *οἶον εἶδετε ἐν ἐμοί* καὶ νῦν ἀκούετε ἐν ἐμοί, 29 *For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well—* 30 *since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had* and now hear that I still have (Phil. 1:29-30). This experience left a deep impression on Paul that he did not forget.

When the missionaries left Philippi for Thessalonica, we know for sure from Luke's narrative that the group included Paul, Silas, and Timothy. Because the we-section has already terminated we cannot be certain whether or not Luke left with them or stayed behind in Philippi.

6.1.3.2 Work in Thessalonica, Acts 17:1-9; 1 Thess 1:4-2:20; 2 Thess 2:6, 3:7-10

Acts 17:1-9. 17 After Paul and Silas had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. 2 And Paul went in, as was his custom, and on three sabbath days argued with them from the scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This is the Messiah, Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you." 4 Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women. 5 But the Jews became jealous, and with the help of some ruffians in the marketplaces they formed a mob and set the city in an uproar. While they were searching for Paul and Silas to bring them out to the assembly, they attacked Jason's house. 6 When they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some believers before the city authorities, shouting, "These people who have been turning the world upside down have come here also, 7 and Jason has entertained them as guests. They are all acting contrary to the decrees of the emperor, saying that there is another king named Jesus." 8 The people and the city officials were disturbed when they heard this, 9 and after they had taken bail from Jason and the others, they let them go.

17 Διοδεύσαντες δὲ τὴν Ἀμφίπολιν καὶ τὴν Ἀπολλωνίαν ἦλθον εἰς Θεσσαλονίκην ὅπου ἦν συναγωγὴ τῶν Ἰουδαίων. 2 κατὰ δὲ τὸ εἰωθὸς τῷ Παύλῳ εἰσῆλθεν πρὸς αὐτοὺς καὶ ἐπὶ σάββατα τρία διελέξατο αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν, 3 διανοίγων καὶ παρατιθέμενος ὅτι τὸν χριστὸν ἔδει παθεῖν καὶ ἀναστῆναι ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ χριστὸς [ὁ] Ἰησοῦς ὃν ἐγὼ καταγγέλλω ὑμῖν. 4 καὶ τινες ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐπίσθησαν καὶ προσεκληρώθησαν τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ τῷ Σιλᾷ, τῶν τε σεβομένων Ἑλλήνων πλῆθος πολὺ, γυναικῶν τε τῶν πρώτων οὐκ ὀλίγαι. 5 Ζηλώσαντες δὲ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ προσλαβόμενοι τῶν ἀγοραίων ἄνδρας τινὰς πονηροὺς καὶ ὄχλοποιήσαντες ἐθορύβουν τὴν πόλιν καὶ ἐπιστάντες τῇ οἰκίᾳ Ἰάσονος ἐζήτουν αὐτοὺς προαγαγεῖν εἰς τὸν δῆμον· 6 μὴ εὐρόντες δὲ αὐτοὺς ἔσυρον Ἰάσονα καὶ τινὰς ἀδελφοὺς ἐπὶ τοὺς πολιτάρχας βοῶντες ὅτι οἱ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἀναστατώσαντες οὗτοι καὶ ἐνθάδε πάρεσιν, 7 οὓς ὑποδέδεται Ἰάσων· καὶ οὗτοι πάντες ἀπέναντι τῶν δογμάτων Καίσαρος πράσσοουσιν βασιλέα ἕτερον λέγοντες εἶναι Ἰησοῦν. 8 ἐτάραξαν δὲ τὸν ὄχλον καὶ τοὺς πολιτάρχας ἀκούοντας ταῦτα, 9 καὶ λαβόντες τὸ ἱκανὸν παρὰ τοῦ Ἰάσονος καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀπέλυσαν αὐτούς.

1 Thess. 1:4-2:20. 4 For we know, brothers and sisters beloved by God, that he has chosen you, 5 because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. 6 And you became imitators of us

⁷⁵“The Thessalonians knew of these experiences (see Acts 16:19–24, 35–40; cf. Phil 1:29–30), because either Paul and his companions or those who had brought him financial aid from Philippi (Phil 4:16) had told them about the hardships he had endured in Philippi.” [Abraham J. Malherbe, vol. 32B, *The Letters to the Thessalonians: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 136.]

and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia. 8 For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place your faith in God has become known, so that we have no need to speak about it. 9 For the people of those regions report about us what kind of welcome we had among you, and how you turned to God from idols, to serve a living and true God, 10 and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead—Jesus, who rescues us from the wrath that is coming.

2.1 You yourselves know, brothers and sisters, that our coming to you was not in vain, 2 but though we had already suffered and been shamefully mistreated at Philippi, as you know, we had courage in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in spite of great opposition. 3 For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, 4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts. 5 As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed; 6 nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, 7 though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. 8 So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.

9 You remember our labor and toil, brothers and sisters; we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. 10 You are witnesses, and God also, how pure, upright, and blameless our conduct was toward you believers. 11 As you know, we dealt with each one of you like a father with his children, 12 urging and encouraging you and pleading that you lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

13 We also constantly give thanks to God for this, that when you received the word of God that you heard from us, you accepted it not as a human word but as what it really is, God's word, which is also at work in you believers. 14 For you, brothers and sisters, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you suffered the same things from your own compatriots as they did from the Jews, 15 who killed both the Lord Jesus and the prophets, and drove us out; they displease God and oppose everyone 16 by hindering us from speaking to the Gentiles so that they may be saved. Thus they have constantly been filling up the measure of their sins; but God's wrath has overtaken them at last.

17 As for us, brothers and sisters, when, for a short time, we were made orphans by being separated from you—in person, not in heart—we longed with great eagerness to see you face to face. 18 For we wanted to come to you—certainly I, Paul, wanted to again and again—but Satan blocked our way. 19 For what is our hope or joy or crown of boasting before our Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you? 20 Yes, you are our glory and joy!

1.4 εἰδότες, ἀδελφοί ἡγαπημένοι ὑπὸ [τοῦ] θεοῦ, τὴν ἐκλογὴν ὑμῶν, 5 ὅτι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐγενήθη εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν λόγῳ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν δυνάμει καὶ ἐν πνεύματι ἁγίῳ καὶ [ἐν] πληροφορίᾳ πολλῇ, καθὼς οἴδατε οἷοι ἐγενήθημεν [ἐν] ὑμῖν δι' ὑμᾶς. 6 Καὶ ὑμεῖς μιμηταὶ ἡμῶν ἐγενήθητε καὶ τοῦ κυρίου, δεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον ἐν θλίψει πολλῇ μετὰ χαρᾶς πνεύματος ἁγίου, 7 ὥστε γενέσθαι ὑμᾶς τύπον πᾶσιν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐν τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἀχαΐᾳ. 8 ἄφ' ὑμῶν γὰρ ἐξήχηται ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου οὐ μόνον ἐν τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ καὶ [ἐν τῇ] Ἀχαΐᾳ, ἀλλ' ἐν παντὶ τόπῳ ἢ πίστις ὑμῶν ἢ πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἐξελήλυθεν, ὥστε μὴ χρειᾶν ἔχειν ἡμᾶς λαλεῖν τι. 9 αὐτοὶ γὰρ περὶ ἡμῶν ἀπαγγέλλουσιν ὅποιαν εἴσοδον ἔσχομεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, καὶ πῶς ἐπεστρέψατε πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀπὸ τῶν εἰδώλων δουλεύειν θεῷ ζῶντι καὶ ἀληθινῷ 10 καὶ ἀναμένειν τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῶν οὐρανῶν, ὃν ἤγειρεν ἐκ [τῶν] νεκρῶν, Ἰησοῦν τὸν ρυόμενον ἡμᾶς ἐκ τῆς ὀργῆς τῆς ἐρχομένης.

2.1 Αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἴδατε, ἀδελφοί, τὴν εἴσοδον ἡμῶν τὴν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ὅτι οὐ κενὴ γέγονεν, 2 ἀλλὰ προπαθόντες καὶ ὑβρισθέντες, καθὼς οἴδατε, ἐν Φιλίπποις ἐπαρρησιασάμεθα ἐν τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν λαλήσαι πρὸς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν πολλῷ ἀγῶνι. 3 ἢ γὰρ παράκλησις ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐκ πλάνης οὐδὲ ἐξ ἀκαθαρσίας οὐδὲ ἐν δόλῳ, 4 ἀλλὰ καθὼς δεδοκιμάσαμεθα ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πιστευθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, οὕτως λαλοῦμεν, οὐχ ὡς ἀνθρώποις ἀρέσκοντες ἀλλὰ θεῷ τῷ δοκιμάζοντι τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν. 5 Οὔτε γὰρ ποτε ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας ἐγενήθημεν, καθὼς οἴδατε, οὔτε ἐν προφάσει πλεονεξίας, θεὸς μάρτυς, 6 οὔτε ζητοῦντες ἐξ ἀνθρώπων δόξαν οὔτε ἀφ' ὑμῶν οὔτε ἀπ' ἄλλων, 7 δυνάμενοι ἐν βάρει εἶναι ὡς Χριστοῦ ἀπόστολοι. ἀλλὰ ἐγενήθημεν νήπιοι ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν, ὡς ἐὰν τροφὸς θάλπη τὰ ἑαυτῆς τέκνα, 8 οὕτως ὁμειρόμενοι ὑμῶν εὐδοκοῦμεν μεταδοῦναι ὑμῖν οὐ μόνον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ψυχάς, διότι ἀγαπητοὶ ἡμῖν ἐγενήθητε. 9 Μνημονεύετε γὰρ, ἀδελφοί, τὸν κόπον ἡμῶν καὶ τὸν μόχθον· νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐργαζόμενοι πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαι τίνα ὑμῶν ἐκηρύξαμεν εἰς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ. 10 ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες καὶ ὁ θεός, ὡς ὁσίως καὶ δικαίως καὶ ἀμέμπτως ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐγενήθημεν, 11 καθάπερ οἴδατε, ὡς ἕνα ἕκαστον ὑμῶν ὡς πατὴρ τέκνα ἑαυτοῦ 12 παρακαλοῦντες ὑμᾶς καὶ παραμυθούμενοι καὶ μαρτυρούμενοι εἰς τὸ περιπατεῖν ὑμᾶς ἀξίως τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ βασιλείαν καὶ δόξαν.

13 Καὶ διὰ τοῦτο καὶ ἡμεῖς εὐχαριστοῦμεν τῷ θεῷ ἀδιαλείπτως, ὅτι παραλαβόντες λόγον ἀκοῆς παρ' ἡμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐδέξασθε οὐ λόγον ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ καθὼς ἐστὶν ἀληθῶς λόγον θεοῦ, ὃς καὶ ἐνεργεῖται ἐν ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν. 14 Ὑμεῖς γὰρ μιμηταὶ ἐγενήθητε, ἀδελφοί, τῶν ἐκκλησιῶν τοῦ θεοῦ τῶν οὐσῶν ἐν τῇ Ἰουδαίᾳ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, ὅτι τὰ αὐτὰ ἐπάθετε καὶ ὑμεῖς ὑπὸ τῶν ἰδίων συμφυλητῶν καθὼς καὶ αὐτοὶ ὑπὸ τῶν Ἰουδαίων, 15 τῶν καὶ τὸν κύριον ἀποκτείναντων Ἰησοῦν καὶ τοὺς προφήτας καὶ ἡμᾶς ἐκδιωξάντων καὶ θεῷ μὴ ἀρεσκόντων καὶ πᾶσιν ἀνθρώποις ἐναντίων, 16 κωλυόντων ἡμᾶς τοῖς ἔθνεσιν λαλήσαι ἵνα σωθῶσιν, εἰς τὸ ἀναπληρῶσαι αὐτῶν τὰς

ἀμαρτίας πάντοτε. ἔφθασεν δὲ ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἡ ὀργὴ εἰς τέλος.

17 Ἡμεῖς δὲ, ἀδελφοί, ἀπορφανισθέντες ἀφ' ὑμῶν πρὸς καιρὸν ὥρας, προσώπων οὐ καρδία, περισσοτέρως ἐσπουδάσαμεν τὸ πρόσωπον ὑμῶν ἰδεῖν ἐν πολλῇ ἐπιθυμίᾳ. 18 διότι ἠθελήσαμεν ἔλθειν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἐγὼ μὲν Παῦλος καὶ ἄπαξ καὶ δις, καὶ ἐνέκομεν ἡμᾶς ὁ σατανᾶς. 19 τίς γὰρ ἡμῶν ἐλπίς ἢ χαρὰ ἢ στέφανος καυχήσεως - ἢ οὐχὶ καὶ ὑμεῖς - ἐμπροσθεν τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ ἐν τῇ αὐτοῦ παρουσίᾳ; 20 ὑμεῖς γὰρ ἐστε ἡ δόξα ἡμῶν καὶ ἡ χαρὰ.

2 Thess. 3:7-10. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, 8 and we did not eat anyone's bread without paying for it; but with toil and labor we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you. 9 This was not because we do not have that right, but in order to give you an example to imitate. 10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: Anyone unwilling to work should not eat.

7 Αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἶδατε πῶς δεῖ μιμεῖσθαι ἡμᾶς, ὅτι οὐκ ἠτακτήσαμεν ἐν ὑμῖν 8 οὐδὲ δωρεὰν ἄρτον ἐφάγομεν παρά τινος, ἀλλ' ἐν κόπῳ καὶ μόχθῳ νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐργαζόμενοι πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαι τινα ὑμῶν· 9 οὐχ ὅτι οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν, ἀλλ' ἵνα ἑαυτοὺς τύπον δώμεν ὑμῖν εἰς τὸ μιμεῖσθαι ἡμᾶς. 10 καὶ γὰρ ὅτε ἦμεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, τοῦτο παρηγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν, ὅτι εἴ τις οὐ θέλει ἐργάζεσθαι μηδὲ ἐσθιέτω.

The missionary team left Philippi traveling west first through Amphipolis and Apollonia before reaching Thessalonica. They followed an established Roman road through this rather mountainous region.⁷⁶ They followed the *Via Egnatia* (Greek: Ἐγνατία Ὁδός), that ran west to east across the provinces of Illyricum, Macedonia, and Thrace from the Adriatic Sea to the Aegean Sea for a total of about 1,120 kilometers.⁷⁷

The first town they came to was Amphipolis some 50 kilometers west of Philippi.⁷⁸ Luke's term *διοδεύω*, *passing through*, leaves it unclear as to whether evangelizing activity took place. The other use of this verb in the NT in Luke 8:1 regarding Jesus' passing through cities and villages in Galilee clearly implies preaching and teaching on His part. Perhaps, Luke is implying the same thing here for Amphipolis as well. Amphipolis was a town of reasonable size and had commercial importance during this period of ancient history. After going through this town, about 48 kilometers further southwest from Amphipolis, they came to Apollonia.⁷⁹ Not much is known about this town which seems to have been first established in the fourth century BCE between Amphipolis and Thessalonica.⁸⁰ Perhaps evangelizing activity took place there, but



City Wall of Amphipolis dating to 5th Cent. BCE

⁷⁶Hemer (115) thinks that Amphipolis and Apollonia were 'the places where the travellers spent successive nights, dividing the journey into three stages of about 30, 27 and 35 miles'. To cover these distances each in a single day presupposes the use of horses (Begg. 4:202)." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 808.]

⁷⁷According to this work, the distances amount to the following: Philippi to Amphipolis (capital of the first district of Macedonia) ca. 33 miles; Amphipolis to Apollonia, ca. 30 miles; Apollonia to Thessalonica, ca. 38 miles.² Thessalonica (Salonica) was a free city, the most important city of Macedonia.³ It was the residence of the Roman governor.⁴" [Hans Conzelmann, Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 134.]

⁷⁸"Amphipolis, originally called *Ennea Hodoi* (Nine Ways), was colonized by Athenians and founded in 436 B.C. It became the capital of the first (southern) district of Macedonia, being situated about 50.5 km west of Philippi, and an important commercial center. It was encircled by the Strymon River and built on both sides of it; hence its name (Thucydides, Histories 4.102.3). The *Via Egnatia*, running from Neapolis to Dyrrhachium on the Adriatic, passed through Amphipolis, and along this road Paul and his companions would have traveled." [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J., *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 593.]

⁷⁹The name Apollonia, Ἀπολλωνία, was quite popular for city names in the ancient world with some 14 ancient Greek cities with that name. Cf. "List of ancient Greek cities," Wikipedia.org for details.

⁸⁰"APOLLONIA ap-ə-lō'nē-ə [Gk *Apollōnia*]. A town in Mygdonia, a district in Macedonia, to be distinguished from the many

Luke is not clear about this.⁸¹

After traveling westward through these two towns, the missionaries arrived in Thessalonica,⁸²

some 52 kilometers westward on the *Via Egnatia* road. Here Luke makes a shift in his narrative. He especially points out that at Thessalonica there was a Jewish synagogue: ὅπου ἦν συναγωγή τῶν Ἰουδαίων. The pattern of Paul's missionary experience in this town will mirror his earlier experience on the first missionary journey at Pisidian Antioch and Iconium (cf. Acts 13:13-14:7): work first in Jewish synagogue until thrown out and then continue in homes and/or the marketplace until forced to leave the city.

The missionary team remains in the city for something over three weeks; exactly how much is not clear: ἐπὶ σάββατα τρία, for **three sabbaths**, meaning three weeks.⁸³ Paul had three weeks of opportunity in the synagogue to make his case before being forced out. How much longer he was able to remain in the city is not specified by Luke directly. The statement in verse four about converts could imply a period of time prior to the organizing of the riot by the synagogue leaders that forced the missionary team to leave the city (cf. vv. 5-9). It is clear from Luke's statement in v. 10, εὐθέως διὰ νυκτὸς, that the team left the city during the same night after Jason and the other believers had posted bail with the authorities during the day.

The narrative reads very much like an abbreviated version of Paul's experience at Pisidion Antioch a few



Excavation of ancient forum in Thessalonica

other cities bearing this name. It was situated a little S of Lake Bolbe, on the *Via Egnatia*, the great Roman road leading from the coast of the Adriatic to the river Hebrus (Maritza), one of the main military and commercial highways of the empire: it lay between Amphipolis and Thessalonica, a day's journey (Livy xlv.28) or about 30 Roman mi (27.6 mi, 44.4 km) from the former and 38 (35 mi, 56.2 km) from the latter. The foundation of the town may perhaps be dated ca 432 B.C.; in any case, coins are extant that attest its existence in the 4th cent B.C. (B.V. Head, *Historia Numorum* [nd], p. 181). Paul and Silas passed through the town on their journey from Philippi to Thessalonica, but apparently did not stay there (Acts 17:1)." [*The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Revised, ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1988), 1:188.]

⁸¹The contention of a few commentators to see a causal meaning in the relative adverb of place ὅπου is highly questionable, although technically it can assume a causal tone in addition to the spatial core meaning. The interpretive consequence of this assumed meaning is that the missionary team went on to Thessalonica because there was no Jewish synagogue in either Amphipolis or Apollonia. In the one other use of ὅπου in Acts (cf. 20:6), it clearly does not contain the tone of causality, only place.

⁸²"The city was founded around 315 BC by the King Cassander of Macedon, on or near the site of the ancient town of Therma and 26 other local villages.¹⁷ He named it after his wife Thessalonike,¹⁸ a half-sister of Alexander the Great and princess of Macedon as daughter of Philip II. Under the kingdom of Macedon the city retained its own autonomy and parliament¹⁹ and evolved to become the most important city in Macedon.¹⁸

"After the fall of the kingdom of Macedon in 168 BC, Thessalonica became a free city of the Roman Republic under Mark Antony in 41 BC.^{18 20} It grew to be an important trade-hub located on the *Via Egnatia*,²¹ the road connecting Dyrrhachium with Byzantium,²² which facilitated trade between Thessaloniki and great centers of commerce such as Rome and Byzantium.²³ Thessaloniki also lay at the southern end of the main north-south route through the Balkans along the valleys of the Morava and Axios river valleys, thereby linking the Balkans with the rest of Greece.²⁴ The city later became the capital of one of the four Roman districts of Macedonia.²¹ Later it became the capital of all the Greek provinces of the Roman Empire due to the city's importance in the Balkan peninsula. When the Roman Empire was divided into the tetrarchy, Thessaloniki became the administrative capital of one of the four portions of the Empire under Galerius Maximianus Caesar,^{25 26} where Galerius commissioned an imperial palace, a new hippodrome, a triumphal arch and a mausoleum among others.^{26 27 28}

"In 379 when the Roman Prefecture of Illyricum was divided between the East and West Roman Empires, Thessaloniki became the capital of the new Prefecture of Illyricum.²¹ With the Fall of Rome in 476, Thessaloniki became the second-largest city of the Eastern Roman Empire.²³ Around the time of the Roman Empire Thessaloniki was also an important center for the spread of Christianity; the First Epistle to the Thessalonians written by Paul the Apostle is the first written book of the New Testament.^{29"}

[*"Thessaloniki," Wikipedia.org*]

⁸³"The meaning here could be for three weeks but is perhaps more probably on three Sabbaths (cf. 13:27, 42, 44; 15:21; 18:4). Phil. 4:16 (cf. 4:9) suggests very strongly that Paul stayed in Thessalonica a good deal longer than three weeks; so does 1 Thessalonians." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 809.]

years earlier (cf. Acts 13:13-52). Paul launched the evangelizing ministry in Thessalonica at the Jewish synagogue there, κατὰ δὲ τὸ εἰώθος, according to his custom. This phrase indicates that this pattern of “to the Jews first, and then to the Greeks” (Ἰουδαίῳ τε πρῶτον καὶ Ἑλληνι, Rom. 1:16) was at the core of Paul’s missionary strategy. Philippians had been a slight modification of this since no synagogue was present in the city, just the women meeting for prayer by the river.

What the apostle did at the synagogue was διελέξατο αὐτοῖς ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν, διανοίγων καὶ παρατιθέμενος ὅτι τὸν χριστὸν ἔδει παθεῖν καὶ ἀναστῆναι ἐκ νεκρῶν καὶ ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ χριστὸς [ὁ] Ἰησοῦς ὃν ἐγὼ καταγγέλλω ὑμῖν, argued with them from the scriptures, explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, “This is the Messiah, Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you.” The verbal expression is set forth in terms of a general tone διελέξατο⁸⁴ which is then elaborated as διανοίγων and παρατιθέμενος. The general tone was to put on the table controversial ideas with a vigorous defense of them when opposing viewpoints were offered.⁸⁵ This would have been natural for Paul, since his Jewish education generally, and especially his training under Gamaliel, would have given him finely honed skills for following this way to presenting one’s ideas.⁸⁶ The manner and content of that core strategy is expressed by the two modal participles connected adverbially to the finite verb. The first participle from διανοίγω literally means to open up something but here the figurative meaning is intended for opening up the scriptures (ἀπὸ τῶν γραφῶν) to the listeners.⁸⁷ Paul’s explanation of the selected scripture texts from the Hebrew Bible were explained in ways the people could understand. But παρατιθέμενος from παρατίθημι, literally ‘to put before them,’ underscores the ‘then’ and ‘now’ aspect of Paul’s presentation. Paul’s thesis was twofold, as set forth by Luke in the two ὅτι-clauses functioning as the objects of παρατιθέμενος.

First, Paul linked the OT scriptures to the point ὅτι τὸν χριστὸν ἔδει παθεῖν καὶ ἀναστῆναι ἐκ νεκρῶν, that it was necessary for the Messiah to suffer and to rise from the dead. This was a common theme in early Christian preaching.⁸⁸ Such understanding was a radical departure from Jewish Messianic thinking in the first century which saw the promised Messiah mostly as a kingly figure who would crush the Romans as he threw them out

⁸⁴G. D. Kilpatrick (JTS 11 (1960), 340) points out that in Lk. διαλογίζεσθαι is used, in Acts διαλέγεσθαι. He is right in refusing to see here evidence for different authorship, perhaps right in noting in Acts a change in style in the direction of Attic Greek or a more literary Koine.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 810.]

⁸⁵**διαλέγομαι** impf. διελεγόμην Ac 18:19 v.l.; 1 aor. διελέξαμην (s. λέγω; Hom.; Polyaeus 3, 9, 40; 7, 27, 2) Ac 17:2; 18:19; pf. 3 sg. διελέκται (Tat. 21, 3). Pass.: fut. 3 sg. διαλεχθήσεται (Sir 14:20); aor. διελέχθην ([Att.] LXX; Just., D. 2, 4) Mk 9:34; Ac 18:19 v.l. (Hom.+).

1. to engage in speech interchange, converse, discuss, argue (freq. in Attic wr., also PPetr III, 43 [3], 15 [240 B.C.]; BGU 1080, 11; Epict. 1, 17, 4; 2, 8, 12; TestAbr A 5 p. 82, 3 [Stone p. 12] τὰ διαλεγόμενα ὑμῶν; Tat. 21, 3), esp. of instructional discourse that frequently includes exchange of opinions **Ac 18:4; 19:8f; 20:9**. περί τινος (Ps.-Callisth. 3, 32, 2; Just., D. 100, 3; Ath. 9:1) **24:25**. πρὸς τινα (X., Mem. 1, 6, 1; 2, 10, 1; Ex 6:27; Ps.-Callisth., loc. cit.; Jos., Ant. 7, 278; AssMos Fgm. a Denis p. 63=Tromp p. 272) **Ac 24:12**. τινί w. someone (for the syntax, s. 1 Esdr 8:45 ‘inform, tell’; 2 Macc 11:20; EpArist 40; Just., D. 2, 4: the three last ‘discuss, confer’) **17:2, 17; 18:19; 20:7**; sim. converse MPol 7:2.—Of controversies πρὸς τινα with someone (Judg 8:1 B) **Mk 9:34**. περί τινος about someth. (cp. Pla., Ap., 19d; Plut., Pomp. 620 [4, 4]; PSI 330, 8 [258 B.C.] περί διαφόρου οὐ διαλ.; PFlor 132, 3; Just., A II, 3, 3) **Jd 9**.

2. to instruct about someth., inform, instruct (Isocr. 5 [Phil.] 109; Epict.; PSI 401, 4 [III B.C.]; 1 Esdr 8:45; Philo; Joseph.; EHicks, CIR 1, 1887, 45) δ. may have this mng. in many of the above pass. (e.g. **Ac 18:4**), clearly so **Hb 12:5** (δ. of a Scripture pass. also Philo, Leg. All. 3, 118).—GKilpatrick, JTS 11, ’60, 338–40.—Frisk s.v. λέγω. M-M. TW. Sv.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 232.]

⁸⁶The verb translated argued (so most translations) may also mean ‘discussed’ (see Goodspeed). It is doubtful if from the Scriptures can be understood in the sense of ‘quoting texts of Scripture’ (NEB; see Moffatt, Phps). What Paul evidently did was to read passages of scripture and to explain these in light of their fulfillment in Jesus Christ. The relationship of argued to from the Scriptures may be indicated by ‘he argued with the people by referring to the Scriptures’ or ‘he discussed with the people by reading from the Scriptures.’” [Barclay Moon Newman and Eugene Albert Nida, *A Handbook on the Acts of the Apostles*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1972), 328.]

⁸⁷**2. explain, interpret** (Aeneas Gaz. [V/VI A.D.], Theophr. p. 5b Boiss. δ. τὰ τῶν παλαιῶν ἀπόρητα) the Scriptures **Lk 24:32; Ac 17:3** (τὰς γραφάς is to be supplied fr. what precedes).—DELG s.v. οἴγνυμι. TW.

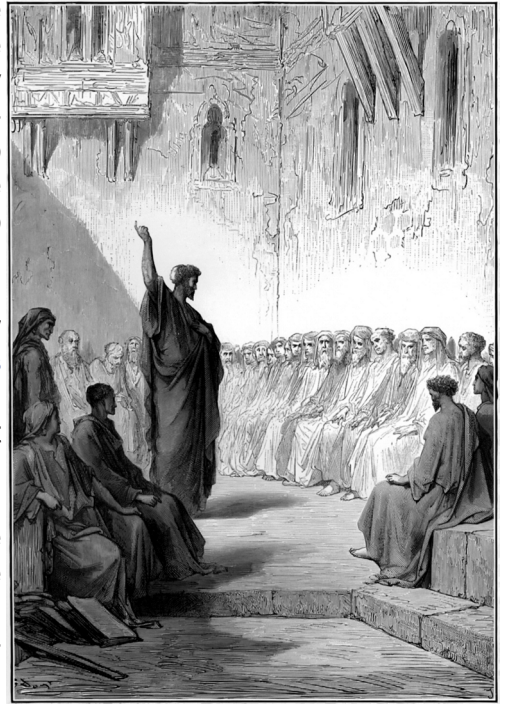
[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 234.]

⁸⁸“That the Scriptures point to the suffering of Christ is a common theme in Luke-Acts: Luke 24:26, 46; Acts 3:18; 26:22f. Cf. 1 Cor 15:3f.; 1 Pet 1:11. The servant psalms of Isaiah would have comprised a major part of these OT proofs of the passion of Christ.” [John B. Polhill, vol. 26, *Acts*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995).]

of the Promised Land.⁸⁹ Thus this new idea of the Messiah had to be carefully established through explaining the OT texts that pointed to the Messiah as a Suffering Servant, such as Isa. 53. Paul had to first identify the Suffering Servant as a Messianic figure -- something not done in Jewish interpretive history nor so stated in the scripture texts. Then he had to convince them that the idea of the Messiah being resurrected was in the texts by implication, since no OT text ever makes a direct statement to this effect.⁹⁰

Second, once the point about the Messiah suffering and being resurrected was established, Paul's second point was καὶ ὅτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ χριστός [ὁ] Ἰησοῦς ὃν ἐγὼ καταγγέλλω ὑμῖν, *that this one is Christ Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you*. The word play with χριστὸν, Messiah, and χριστός, Christ, in the two clauses is lost in translation, but stands out clearly in the original language. The title Μεσσίας or Χριστός for Messiah and the application of that to Jesus as a name or title ὁ Χριστός Ἰησοῦς, *Christ Jesus*, is very clear here. Thus the NRSV is correct in translating the first instance as Messiah and the second instance as Christ, although the connection between them is blurred by the two different English words.

The challenge of making these two points persuasively to a Jewish audience was rather substantial. A lot of give and take back and forth in the discussions between Paul and his synagogue audience took place,



as Paul's points would be challenged by several in the synagogue. His results were mixed: καὶ *τινες ἐξ αὐτῶν* ἐπίσθησαν καὶ προσεκληρώθησαν τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ τῷ Σιλᾷ, τῶν τε σεβομένων Ἑλλήνων πλῆθος πολύ, γυναικῶν τε τῶν πρώτων οὐκ ὀλίγαι, *Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women*. From elsewhere we discover the names of three of these individuals: Jason, Aristarchus, and Secundus.⁹¹ As had been the case beginning at Pisidion Antioch (Acts 13:43-44), Paul had more success with the Gentile God-fearers who were attending the synagogue than with the Jewish audience itself. Some of the Jews present accepted what he had to say: *τινες ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐπίσθησαν*. Further Luke indicated that these Jews καὶ προσεκληρώθησαν τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ τῷ Σιλᾷ, *and they threw in their lot with Paul and Silas*. The verb προσεκληρώθησαν from προσκληρώω signals that these Jewish individuals became closely attached to Paul and Silas.

But Luke stresses that two non-Jewish groups who were present at the synagogue responded in greater numbers. First, τῶν τε σεβομένων Ἑλλήνων πλῆθος πολύ, *of the devout Greeks a large group*. The expression τῶν σεβομένων Ἑλλήνων designates non-Jews who worshipped the God of Israel, i.e., the God-fearers, that are elsewhere referred to in Acts 13:43, 50; 16:14; 17:4, 17; 18:7, 13; 19:27. Thus the pattern established on the first missionary journey continues to dominate here in Macedonia. Both Lydia and the jailor in Philippi were non-Jews. Now in Thessalonica most of those responding to the Gospel are non-Jews.

Second, γυναικῶν τε τῶν πρώτων οὐκ ὀλίγαι, *and of the prominent women not a few*. Quite interestingly,

⁸⁹“To the idea of a suffering Messiah, Luke now adds that of a ‘rising’ Messiah, a notion that is equally foreign to the Hebrew Scriptures; neither of these notions is found in QL.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 594.]

⁹⁰One of those intriguing gaps in the New Testament is detailed statements about how not only Paul but Peter and other first century preachers went about doing this. Acts and other NT texts often suggest these leaders did this, but no detailed explanation on how they did it is provided in terms of what OT texts were used and how they were interpreted christologically by these leaders. A broad hint about what might have been done comes from careful analysis of Matthew's citation of the Old Testament as being fulfilled in Jesus. Additional insight comes from Paul's use of the Psalms in his Pisidion Antioch sermon (Acts 13:32-37):

32 And we bring you the good news that what God promised to our ancestors 33 he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising Jesus; as also it is written in the second psalm, *“You are my Son; today I have begotten you.”* 34 As to his raising him from the dead, no more to return to corruption, he has spoken in this way, *“I will give you the holy promises made to David.”* 35 Therefore he has also said in another psalm, *“You will not let your Holy One experience corruption.”* 36 For David, after he had served the purpose of God in his own generation, died, was laid beside his ancestors, and experienced corruption; 37 but he whom God raised up experienced no corruption.

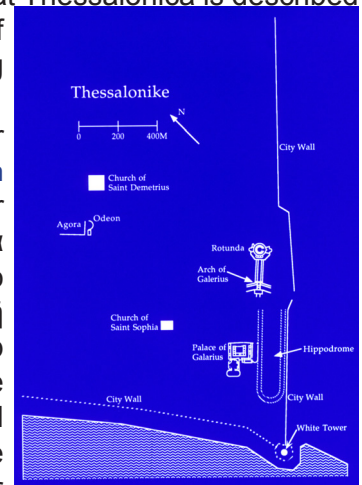
⁹¹“Jason, who is mentioned as the missionaries' host in verse 5, was presumably one of the Jews who believed (the Greek name Jason was assumed by many Jews who were originally named Joshua); Aristarchus and Secundus, described as Thessalonians in 20:4, were probably also converted to the Christian faith at this time.” [F. F. Bruce, *The Book of the Acts*, The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 323.]

at Pisidion Antioch some of the converts were τῶν σεβομένων, *devout individuals* (Acts 13:43). But the opposing Jewish leaders went through τὰς σεβομένας γυναῖκας τὰς εὐσχήμονας, *devout women of high standing*, in order to aggetate against Paul and to get him and Barnabas forced out of town (13:50). The picture that is beginning to emerge is that a sizeable number of non-Jewish women in aristocratic circles of these towns were sympathetic to the Jewish religion.⁹² The difference between those in Pisidion Antioch and in Thessalonica was their openness to the Christian Gospel. In the former they didn't respond well, but did so well in Thessalonica. In both places, however, they seemed to be able to make their own choices, something not always possible even for aristocratic women and seldom ever possible for peasant class women of that time.

At some later point -- how much later we can't tell -- opposition against Paul and Silas arose from the Jewish community in Thessalonica: Ζηλώσαντες δὲ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι καὶ προσλαβόμενοι τῶν ἀγοραίων ἄνδρας τινὰς πονηροὺς καὶ ὄχλοποιήσαντες ἐθορύβουν τὴν πόλιν καὶ ἐπιστάντες τῇ οἰκίᾳ Ἰάσονος ἐζήτουν αὐτοὺς προαγαγεῖν εἰς τὸν δῆμον, *But the Jews became jealous, and with the help of some ruffians in the marketplaces they formed a mob and set the city in an uproar. While they were searching for Paul and Silas to bring them out to the assembly, they attacked Jason's house.* The term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, *the Jews*, expresses in Acts the unbelieving Jews, as also in 12:3; 13:45; 14:2; 17:13, as well as 1 Thess. 2:14-15; this is not the Jewish people as a whole.⁹³ The motivation behind their action was Ζηλώσαντες, having become jealous that Paul's success in winning converts would hurt the influence of the synagogue in the community.⁹⁴ Paul had already experienced this very same thing at Pisidion Antioch (13:45). These Jews then enlisted the help of τῶν ἀγοραίων ἄνδρας τινὰς πονηροὺς, *some evil men from the thugs that hung around the marketplace.* Then together they managed to form a mob, ὄχλοποιήσαντες, and then set the city into an uproar, ἐθορύβουν τὴν πόλιν. Quite interesting a similar riot in an agora at Thessalonica is described by the first century Greek philosopher Plutarch in *Aemilius Paulus* 38.3, the story of a Roman military leader who invaded Macedonia in the second century BCE fighting the then King of Macedonia and left the region in ruins.⁹⁵

Their intent was to find Paul and Silas and take them to 'the assembly' for trial: ἐζήτουν αὐτοὺς προαγαγεῖν εἰς τὸν δῆμον, *they were seeking them to bring them into the assembly.* The δῆμος specified the gathering of the citizens of a city together to conduct business (cf. here and 19:30); normally these meetings were in the ἀγορά of the town. From the information available to them they determined that these two missionaries were staying with Jason, so they went to Jason's house: ἐπιστάντες τῇ οἰκίᾳ Ἰάσονος. The picture painted by Luke with ἐπίστημι is that this mob showed up outside Jason's home demanding that Paul and Silas be handed over to them. We know nothing about this Jason beyond this episode here.⁹⁶ When they did not find Paul and Silas, they seized Jason and other brothers, then brought them before the city authorities: μὴ εὐρόντες δὲ αὐτοὺς ἔσυρον Ἰάσονα καὶ τινὰς ἀδελφοὺς ἐπὶ τοὺς πολιτάρχας. The term πολιτάρχης, literarily in English, 'politarch,' specifies a city magistrate.

Having to bring charges against Jason and the others, they resort to an older standard charge leveled against the Jewish people by Claudius Caesar years before, which had greater appeal to these Roman magis-



⁹²For a helpful survey of the life of aristocratic women in the first century Roman world, see Moya K. Mason, "Ancient Roman Women: A Look at Their Lives," moyak.com. See also by the same author, "Ancient Athenian Women of the Classical Period," moyak.com.

⁹³Just to be sure this was the understanding of readers later on, Codex Bezae (D; 5th century) modifies the phrase to read οἱ δὲ ἀπειθοῦντες Ἰουδαῖοι, *but the unbelieving Jews.*

⁹⁴“ζηλώσαντες: as at 7:9 (the patriarchs envied Joseph); cf. 5:17; 13:45. (ἐπλήσθησαν ζήλου). The Jews feared that they were losing control of the synagogue and their appeal to religious non-Jews, and objected to the success of the Christian preachers.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 812.]

⁹⁵“Appius saw Scipio rushing into the forum attended by men who were of low birth and had lately been slaves, but who were frequenters of the forum and able to gather a mob and force all issues by means of solicitations and shouting’ (ὡς οὖν ἐμβάλλοντος εἰς ἀγορὰν τοῦ Σκηπίωνος κατεῖδε παρὰ πλευρὰν ὁ Ἄππιος ἀνθρώπους ἀγεννεῖς καὶ δεδουλευκότας, ἀγοραίους δὲ καὶ δυναμένους ὄχλον συναγαγεῖν καὶ σπουδαρχίᾳ καὶ κραυγῇ πάντα πράγματα βιάσασθαι).” [Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel and Donald H. Juel, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 135.]

⁹⁶**Ἰάσων, ονος, ὁ** (freq. found, also in LXX; EpArist 49; Joseph. It was a favorite practice among Jews to substitute the purely Gk. name Ἰάσων for the Hebrew-Gk. Ἰησοῦς: Dssm., B 184, 1 [BS 315, 2]; B-D-F §53, 2d) **Jason**.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 465.]

trates⁹⁷: βοῶντες ὅτι οἱ τὴν οἰκουμένην ἀναστατώσαντες οὗτοι καὶ ἐνθάδε πάρεισιν, 7 οὓς ὑποδέδεκται Ἰάσων· καὶ οὗτοι πάντες ἀπέναντι τῶν δογμάτων Καίσαρος⁹⁸ πράσσουσιν βασιλέα ἕτερον λέγοντες εἶναι Ἰησοῦν, shouting, “These people who have been turning the world upside down have come here also, 7 and Jason has entertained them as guests. They are all acting contrary to the decrees of the emperor, saying that there is another king named Jesus.” Very curiously these Jewish instigators against Paul and Silas use the language of a Roman charge against Jews in their accusations before the magistrates. The distinctive twist is that not only Paul and Silas are guilty of treason against Rome but those hosting them -- Jason and the others seized by the mob -- are guilty by association as well. The charge of treason comes with the accusation that Christians teach βασιλέα ἕτερον...εἶναι Ἰησοῦν, that there is another king who is Jesus. For whatever his reasons, Luke frames the charge in terms of the emperor being a βασιλεύς, king, rather than his usual term for the emperor Κάϊσαρ, Caesar (cf. Lk. 23:2; Acts 25:8). The advocating of a new religion without legal status did have some basis,⁹⁹ but at this point the Romans pretty much considered Christianity as a branch of Judaism which did have legal status at least in some regions of the empire.

The result of this mob action was to cause substantial alarm¹⁰⁰ by the residents and the city magistrates: ἐτάραξαν δὲ τὸν ὄχλον καὶ τοὺς πολιτάρχας ἀκούοντας ταῦτα. But the Jewish leaders did not get what they wanted. Instead the city magistrates required Jason and the other local believers seized to post bail and then they were released to return back to their home: καὶ λαβόντες τὸ ἱκανόν¹⁰¹ παρὰ τοῦ Ἰάσονος καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν ἀπέλυσαν αὐτούς. That is, Jason and the others had to put up money to satisfy the magistrates that they would not engage in illegal actions in the city.¹⁰² As the introduction to the next verse indicates, Paul, Silas -- and

⁹⁷“Ὁν τὴν οἰκουμένην, ‘the world,’ compare Pap. London 1912, lines 96–100, 10 where Claudius commands the Alexandrian Jews ‘not to introduce or invite Jews who sail down to Alexandria from Syria or Egypt, thus compelling me to conceive the greater suspicion; otherwise I will by all means take vengeance on them as fomenting a general plague for the whole world’ (μηδὲ ἐπάγεσθαι ἢ προσεῖεσθαι ἀπὸ Συρίας ἢ Αἰγύπτου καταπλέοντας Ἰουδαίους ἐξ οὗ μείζονας ὑπονοίας ἀνανκασθήσομε λαμβάνειν· εἰ δὲ μή, πάντα τρόπον αὐτοῦς ἐπεξελεύσομαι καθάπερ κοινήν τεινα τῆς οἰκουμένης νόσον ἐξεγείροντας); also recension C of the Acts of Isidore, Pap. Berol. 8877, lines 22–24: ‘I accuse them [the Jews] of wishing to stir up the entire world’ (ἐγκ[αλῶ αὐτοῖς] [ὅτι κ]αὶ ὄλην τὴν οἰκουμένην [θέλουσι] [ταράξ]ειν).¹¹⁷ [Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel and Donald H. Juel, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 135].

⁹⁸One uncertainty out of this is derived from the legal status of Thessalonica as a *civitas libera* at this point in time, which meant exemption from many of the Roman laws. As C.H. Dodd (ICC) notes:

Similarly it is difficult to give a precise meaning to the δόγματα Καίσαρος. In any case, Thessalonica was a *civitas libera*, and the decrees (Vg has *decreta*; contrast Lk. 2:1, where δόγμα is *edictum*) of Caesar were thus not binding on the magistrates; Sherwin-White (96) observes that for this reason ‘the city magistrates were not compelled to take serious action’. Ehrhardt (Acts 96) asks, ‘What decrees were they? The most likely answer is that they were the very ones by which the Jews had been banished from Rome because of their rioting *impulsore Chresto* ... The mob thus regarded the differences between St Paul and the synagogal Jews at Thessalonica as an internal quarrel of the Jews, and was determined to side with that party which was loyal to the Emperor.’ It may be possible to do better than this. E. A. Judge saw here ‘reference to edicts against predictions, especially of the death or change of rulers, first promulgated by the aged Augustus in AD 11 (Dio 56:25:5–6) and enforced through the local administration of oaths of loyalty’ (Hemer 167, summarizing Judge in RTR 30 (1971), 1–7). K. P. Donfried (NTS 31 (1985), 342–6) asks why the politarchs are appealed to rather than the proconsul; his answer is that it was the politarchs who were responsible for administering the oath of loyalty to the Emperor.

[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 815–16.].

⁹⁹“A Roman could not adopt Judaism without liability according to Roman penal code; Cicero, *De legibus* 2.8.19: “No one shall have gods for himself, either new or foreign gods, unless they are officially recognized” (nisi publice adscitos, i.e., acknowledged by the state); cf. Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 67.14.2; 57.18.5.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 587.]

¹⁰⁰The use of ἐτάραξαν from ταράσσω can suggest several possible meanings. Literally, ἐτάραξαν here means “they shook up the crowds and the magistrates as they were listening to these things” Some see this as suggesting confusion as in Acts 17:8, but the more natural sense is that these Jewish instigators created fright and concern in the minds of the audience with their charges. The fear would have come out of the rigid Roman tradition that city leaders along with the citizens must keep order and peace in a town at all costs or else face the wrath of the Roman authorities. Remember these are local Greek, not Roman, magistrates charged with maintaining order in Thessalonica.

¹⁰¹“λαμβάνειν τὸ ἱκανόν, ‘to take security,’ is equivalent to the legal term *satis accipere*, ‘to take/receive bail.’¹⁴⁷ [Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel and Donald H. Juel, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 135.]

¹⁰²“λαμβάνετε τὸ ἱκανόν is a Latinism, *cum satis accepissent*; see M. 1:20; BDR § 5:4; Moule, IB 192. The Greeks adopted the

Timothy and possibly Luke -- were escorted out of town during the night by the believing community that had come into being under their ministry: Οἱ δὲ ἀδελφοὶ εὐθέως διὰ νυκτὸς ἐξέπεμψαν τὸν τε Παῦλον καὶ τὸν Σιλᾶν εἰς Βέροϊαν, *That very night the brothers sent Paul and Silas off to Beroea.*

What we see taking place in Thessalonica is well summarized by Paul in 1 Thess. 1:4-2:20 and 2 Thess. 3:7-10.¹⁰³ And these are summarized well by Paul in 1:5-7:

5 ὅτι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐγενήθη εἰς ὑμᾶς ἐν λόγῳ μόνον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἐν δυνάμει καὶ ἐν πνεύματι ἀγίῳ καὶ [ἐν] πληροφορίᾳ πολλῇ, καθὼς οἴδατε οἷοι ἐγενήθημεν [ἐν] ὑμῖν δι' ὑμᾶς. 6 Καὶ ὑμεῖς μιμηταὶ ἡμῶν ἐγενήθητε καὶ τοῦ κυρίου, δεξάμενοι τὸν λόγον ἐν θλίψει πολλῇ μετὰ χαρᾶς πνεύματος ἀγίου, 7 ὥστε γενέσθαι ὑμᾶς τύπον πᾶσιν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐν τῇ Μακεδονίᾳ καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἀχαΐᾳ.

5 because our message of the gospel came to you not in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction; just as you know what kind of persons we proved to be among you for your sake. 6 And you became imitators of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit, 7 so that you became an example to all the believers in Macedonia and in Achaia.

Their preaching of the Gospel to the Thessalonians was done under the leadership and empowerment of the Holy Spirit. This is the key to the quick success in getting a new church established. The missionaries exemplified complete integrity (cf. 2:3-8 for details¹⁰⁴) while in the city thus inspiring the new converts to want to be like them in their new Christian commitment. Paul alludes to their having suffered persecution at the beginning (v. 6) that Luke has described in 17:1-9. Paul expands on this persecution theme in 2:14-17. An important part of his integrity was that the missionary team earned their own way while in the city (1 Thess. 2:9-12; 2 Thess. 3:7-10¹⁰⁵). They did not take money from the Thessalonians for 'services to the new converts.' The church at Philippi

legal usage from Rome; 'What is happening to Jason is clear enough: he is giving security for the good behaviour of his guests, and hence hastens to dispatch Paul and Silas out of the way to Beroea, where the jurisdiction of the magistrates of Thessalonica was not valid' (Sherwin-White 95f). This comment does not quite do justice to καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν. Not only Jason but also the brothers (v. 6) were thus cautioned, and no doubt they were required to give security for their own behaviour as well as that of Paul and Silas before being dismissed (the magistrates ἀπέλυσαν αὐτούς)—indeed it had not been proved that Paul and Silas were guests with Jason (v. 6).'' [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 816-17.]

¹⁰³Although a few commentators find great difficulty in bringing together Luke's account in 17:1-9 with Paul's references in First and Second Thessalonians along with Philippians, most of the objections are artificial and have alternative solutions with equal evidence. Most of the objections center on the apparent brief stay of Paul in Thessalonica in Acts and the picture of a lengthy stay in Paul's own writings. But Luke's account does not inherently imply a three week stay in the city, and neither do Paul's references imply a long stay of several months. Most of these objections stem from an automatic assumption of tension and contradiction between the 'Lucan Paul' and the Paul of the epistles. But the primary texts in Acts and Paul's writings do not contain these assumed tensions in the manner they are normally presented in modern scholarship.

¹⁰⁴**1 Thess. 2:3-8 NRSV.** 3 For our appeal does not spring from deceit or impure motives or trickery, 4 but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the message of the gospel, even so we speak, not to please mortals, but to please God who tests our hearts. 5 As you know and as God is our witness, we never came with words of flattery or with a pretext for greed; 6 nor did we seek praise from mortals, whether from you or from others, 7 though we might have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nurse tenderly caring for her own children. 8 So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.

3 ἢ γὰρ παράκλησις ἡμῶν οὐκ ἐκ πλάνης οὐδὲ ἐξ ἀκαθαρσίας οὐδὲ ἐν δόλῳ, 4 ἀλλὰ καθὼς δεδοκιμάσαμεθα ὑπὸ τοῦ θεοῦ πιστευθῆναι τὸ εὐαγγέλιον, οὕτως λαλοῦμεν, οὐχ ὡς ἄνθρωποις ἀρέσκοντες ἀλλὰ θεῷ τῷ δοκιμάζοντι τὰς καρδίας ἡμῶν. 5 Οὕτε γὰρ ποτε ἐν λόγῳ κολακείας ἐγενήθημεν, καθὼς οἴδατε, οὔτε ἐν προφάσει πλεονεξίας, θεὸς μάρτυς, 6 οὔτε ζητοῦντες ἐξ ἀνθρώπων δόξαν οὔτε ἀφ' ὑμῶν οὔτε ἀπ' ἄλλων, 7 δυνάμενοι ἐν βάρει εἶναι ὡς Χριστοῦ ἀπόστολοι. ἀλλὰ ἐγενήθημεν νήπιοι ἐν μέσῳ ὑμῶν, ὡς ἐὰν τροφὸς θάλπη τὰ ἑαυτῆς τέκνα, 8 οὕτως ὁμειρόμενοι ὑμῶν εὐδοκοῦμεν μεταδοῦναι ὑμῖν οὐ μόνον τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰς ἑαυτῶν ψυχὰς, διότι ἀγαπητοὶ ἡμῖν ἐγενήθητε.

¹⁰⁵**1 Thess. 2:9-12 NRSV.** 9 You remember our labor and toil, brothers and sisters; we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you while we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. 10 You are witnesses, and God also, how pure, upright, and blameless our conduct was toward you believers. 11 As you know, we dealt with each one of you like a father with his children, 12 urging and encouraging you and pleading that you lead a life worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory.

9 Μνημονεῦτε γάρ, ἀδελφοί, τὸν κόπον ἡμῶν καὶ τὸν μόχθον· νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐργαζόμενοι πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαι τίνα ὑμῶν ἐκνρῦξάμεν εἰς ὑμᾶς τὸ εὐαγγέλιον τοῦ θεοῦ. 10 ὑμεῖς μάρτυρες καὶ ὁ θεός, ὡς ὀσίως καὶ δικαίως καὶ ἀμέμπτως ὑμῖν τοῖς πιστεύουσιν ἐγενήθημεν, 11 καθάπερ οἴδατε, ὡς ἕνα ἕκαστον ὑμῶν ὡς πατὴρ τέκνα ἑαυτοῦ 12 παρακαλοῦντες ὑμᾶς καὶ παραμυθούμενοι καὶ μαρτυρόμενοι εἰς τὸ περιπατεῖν ὑμᾶς ἀξίως τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ καλοῦντος ὑμᾶς εἰς τὴν ἑαυτοῦ βασιλείαν καὶ δόξαν.

2 Thess. 3:7-10 NRSV. 7 For you yourselves know how you ought to imitate us; we were not idle when we were with you, 8 and we did not eat anyone's bread without paying for it; but with toil and labor we worked night and day, so that we might not burden any of you. 9 This was not because we do not have that right, but in order to give you an example to imitate. 10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this command: Anyone unwilling to work should not eat.

7 Αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἴδατε πῶς δεῖ μιμεῖσθαι ἡμᾶς, ὅτι οὐκ ἠτακτήσαμεν ἐν ὑμῖν 8 οὐδὲ δωρεὰν ἄρτον ἐφάγομεν παρά τινος, ἀλλ' ἐν

also helped out with contributions sent to them while in the city (Phil. 4:15-16¹⁰⁶).

Lessons. A powerful lesson should emerge from Paul's initial ministry at Thessalonica. If you really want to see what God can do, then preach the Gospel under complete surrender to the Spirit of God while living your life in spotless integrity and caring ministry to others. This will in no way exempt you from facing persecution or real hardships, as Paul learned. But you will walk away from ministry in a place after time rejoicing in the existence of a newly formed thriving community of God's people in a sea of paganism. And this community will last well beyond your time in the city.

6.1.3.3 Work in Berea, Acts 17:10-14

Acts 17:10-14. 10 That very night the believers sent Paul and Silas off to Berea; and when they arrived, they went to the Jewish synagogue. 11 These Jews were more receptive than those in Thessalonica, for they welcomed the message very eagerly and examined the scriptures every day to see whether these things were so. 12 Many of them therefore believed, including not a few Greek women and men of high standing. 13 But when the Jews of Thessalonica learned that the word of God had been proclaimed by Paul in Berea as well, they came there too, to stir up and incite the crowds. 14 Then the believers immediately sent Paul away to the coast, but Silas and Timothy remained behind.

10 Οἱ δὲ ἀδελφοὶ εὐθέως διὰ νυκτὸς ἐξέπεμψαν τὸν τε Παῦλον καὶ τὸν Σιλᾶν εἰς Βέροιαν, οἵτινες παραγενόμενοι εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἀπήρσαν. 11 οὗτοι δὲ ἦσαν εὐγενέστεροι τῶν ἐν Θεσσαλονίκη, οἵτινες ἐδέξαντο τὸν λόγον μετὰ πάσης προθυμίας καθ' ἡμέραν ἀνακρίνοντες τὰς γραφὰς εἰ ἔχοι ταῦτα οὕτως. 12 πολλοὶ μὲν οὖν ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐπίστευσαν καὶ τῶν Ἑλληνίδων γυναικῶν τῶν εὐσχημόνων καὶ ἀνδρῶν οὐκ ὀλίγοι. 13 Ὡς δὲ ἔγνωσαν οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης Ἰουδαῖοι ὅτι καὶ ἐν τῇ Βεροίᾳ κατηγγέλη ὑπὸ τοῦ Παύλου ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ, ἤλθον κάκεῖ σαλεύοντες καὶ ταρασσόντες τοὺς ὄχλους. 14 εὐθέως δὲ τότε τὸν Παῦλον ἐξαπέστειλαν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ πορεύεσθαι ἕως ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν, ὑπέμειναν τε ὁ τε Σιλᾶς καὶ ὁ Τιμόθεος ἐκεῖ.

The next stop down the road was at Berea,¹⁰⁷ some 72 plus kilometers to the southwest of Thessalonica,¹⁰⁸ several kilometers off the *Via Egnatia* on the south of the road.¹⁰⁹ The modern Greek city of Veria is built on this site today.¹¹⁰



κόπῳ καὶ μόχθῳ νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ἐργαζόμενοι πρὸς τὸ μὴ ἐπιβαρῆσαι τίνα ὑμῶν· 9 οὐχ ὅτι οὐκ ἔχομεν ἐξουσίαν, ἀλλ' ἵνα ἑαυτοὺς τύπον δώμεν ὑμῖν εἰς τὸ μιμεῖσθαι ἡμᾶς. 10 καὶ γὰρ ὅτε ἤμεν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, τοῦτο παρηγγέλλομεν ὑμῖν, ὅτι εἴ τις οὐ θέλει ἐργάζεσθαι μηδὲ ἐσθιέτω.

¹⁰⁶**Phil. 4:15-16 NRSV.** 15 You Philippians indeed know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you alone. 16 For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me help for my needs more than once.

15 οἴδατε δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς, Φιλιππηῖοι, ὅτι ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, ὅτε ἐξῆλθον ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, οὐδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία ἐκοινωνήσεν εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήψεως εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς μόνοι, 16 ὅτι καὶ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκη καὶ ἅπασι καὶ δις εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μοι ἐπέμψατε.

¹⁰⁷Different, separate spellings for Berea surface in the literature: Βερέα, Berea, Βέροια, Beroia, and Βερωία, Beroea. The KJV and a few others use Βερέα, Berea, while most recent English translations use Βερωία, Beroea. But the Greek text has Βέροια, Beroia.

¹⁰⁸“A Macedonian town on the Egnatian Way (40°31' N; 22°14' E) which Paul and Silas visited (Acts 17:10–15). Berea, ‘a place of many waters,’ is located near natural springs, 24 miles inland from the Gulf of Thermai, just below Mt. Bermius. The abundance of streams, the 600-ft. altitude, the scenic view of the Haliacmon plains, and its out-of-the-way location (Cic. Pis. 36) make Berea one of the more desirable towns of the district of Emathia in southwestern Macedonia—modern Verria. Acts 17 identifies the Berean Jews as nobler than the Thessalonians. And Paul’s language implies that his audience was of high social standing. Numerous extant inscriptions attest to the town’s ancient prominence. Berea’s role in military engagements is noted by the classicists (Polybius 27. 8; 28. 8; Livy 44. 45; 45. 29). Pompey chose Berea as his winter home (49–48 B.C.) before the battle of Pharsalus. The city fell for the last time to the Turks in 1374. Berea’s bishopric status also highlights its prominence. Andronicus II (1283–1328) made the town a metropolis after it had already realized bishopric status under the metropolitan of Thessalonica.” [Jerry A. Pattengale, “Berea (Place)” In vol. 1, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 675.]

¹⁰⁹Despite Pattengale’s statement above, Berea was not located directly on the Via Egnatia. “It is several miles south of the main road of the region, the Egnatian Way, which may account for Cicero’s comment that it is a ‘town off the beaten track’ (In *Pisonem* 36.89).” [John D. Wineland, “Beroea (Place)” In vol. 1, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 678.]

¹¹⁰“According to tradition Onesimus was the first bishop of the city. The bishopric of Berea was under the metropolitan of Thessalonica and was later assigned its own metropolitan by Andronicus II (1283–1328).” [John D. Wineland, “Beroea (Place)” In vol. 1, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 678.]

Some aspects of the missionaries' experiences would be better, while some of them remained similar to what they had experienced in Philippi and Thessalonica.¹¹¹ Luke does not tell us which night of the week the missionary team had to leave the city of Thessalonica. With the trip from Thessalonica to Berea taking a couple of days travel time by foot or more, the men had some time to get settled in the city before beginning their ministry with preaching in the Jewish synagogue. The affluence of the town, along with the better climate at the higher elevation, must have been attractive to these weary missionaries. Not to mention the nearby springs some of which served as baths for relaxation.

No mention is made directly concerning the length of time spent in the city, but some weeks probably was the case. At least enough time passed so that word traveled back to Thessalonica and the synagogue leaders organized a group to travel to Berea in order to shut down the missionary work of Paul and his associates.

Luke gives us a very summary view of the ministry. In typical fashion it centered initially on preaching the Gospel in the Jewish synagogue: Οἱ δὲ ἀδελφοὶ εὐθέως διὰ νυκτὸς ἐξέπεμψαν τὸν τε Παῦλον καὶ τὸν Σιλᾶν εἰς Βέροιαν, οἵτινες παραγενόμενοι εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν τῶν Ἰουδαίων ἀπήεσαν. The difference from Thessalonica was the receptiveness of the Jewish people to the Gospel: οὗτοι δὲ ἦσαν εὐγενέστεροι τῶν ἐν Θεσσαλονίκη, οἵτινες ἐδέξαντο τὸν λόγον μετὰ πάσης προθυμίας καθ' ἡμέραν ἀνακρίνοντες τὰς γραφὰς εἰ ἔχοι ταῦτα οὕτως, *These Jews were more receptive than those in Thessalonica, for they welcomed the message very eagerly and examined the scriptures every day to see whether these things were so.* Luke's use of the comparative adjective εὐγενέστεροι highlights Luke's view of the Jews in Berea as 'more noble' than those in Thessalonica.¹¹² Could it possibly be that the greater affluence of the Jews in Berea gave them more openness to new ideas and less fear of Hellenizing the Torah? Possibly, but this is not entirely clear.¹¹³ Whatever made the difference, Luke bases this quality of εὐγενέστεροι on the fact that ἐδέξαντο τὸν λόγον μετὰ πάσης προθυμίας καθ' ἡμέραν ἀνακρίνοντες¹¹⁴ τὰς γραφὰς εἰ ἔχοι ταῦτα οὕτως, *for they welcomed the message very eagerly and examined the scriptures every day to see whether these things were so.* In Acts ἐδέξαντο τὸν λόγον, *they received the Word*, is typically Luke's way of saying that they became Christians (cf. 2:41; 8:14; 11:1). Luke adds that this reception of the Gospel was μετὰ πάσης προθυμίας, *with complete eagerness*. Also, this reception was grounded in the Hebrew Bible, καθ' ἡμέραν ἀνακρίνοντες τὰς γραφὰς εἰ ἔχοι ταῦτα οὕτως, *examining the scriptures every day to see whether these things were so.*¹¹⁵ The impact of this missionary ministry then was πολλοὶ μὲν οὖν ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐπίστευσαν καὶ τῶν Ἑλληνίδων γυναικῶν τῶν εὐσχημόνων καὶ ἀνδρῶν οὐκ ὀλίγοι, *Many of them therefore believed, including not a few Greek women*

¹¹¹Out of ancient Roman history comes a tale that may account for the missionaries taking the road to Berea. Berea evidently was intended to serve something of a similar role as Derbe had for Paul on the first missionary journey, although it turned into an Iconium like experience:

In a fervent speech against Piso, Cicero (106–43 B.C.) had told how the Roman authorities in Thessalonica were so unpopular with the people that when he was on government business he found it wise to sneak into the provincial capital at night and at times withdraw from the storm of complaints to Berea because it was "off the beaten track" (In *Pisonem* 36).

[Richard N. Longenecker, "The Acts of the Apostles" In *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Volume 9: John and Acts, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1981), 470-71.]

¹¹²"These Jews were better disposed than those in Thessalonica. The Greek comparative adj. *eugenesteroi*, 'more well born,' really denotes nobility of origin, but as it is used in this context, it ascribes to Berean Jews a more noble attitude." [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 597.]

¹¹³"They were εὐγενέστεροι (D p*, εὐγενεῖς). εὐγενής (Lk. 19:12; 1 Cor. 1:26) refers originally to noble birth, but it came naturally to be applied to noble behaviour (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 12:255, οἱ δὲ δοκιμώτατοι καὶ τὰς ψυχὰς εὐγενεῖς οὐκ ἐφρόντισαν αὐτοῦ — the threatening Antiochus Epiphanes; Chrysostom, in Cramer, *Catena* 282, τουτέστιν ἐπιεικέστεροι). See also Philo, Moses 1:18. the infant Moses was εὐγενῆ καὶ ἀστεῖον. Luke means that the Berean Jews allowed no prejudice to prevent them from giving Paul a fair hearing." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 817.]

¹¹⁴"ἀνακρίνειν is nowhere else in the NT used of the study of Scripture; it suggests rather the legal examination of witnesses (or of an accused person)—see Acts 4:9; 12:19; 24:8; 28:18—and this is in fact the sense in which it is used here. Paul has set up the Scriptures as witnesses: does their testimony, when tested, prove his case?" [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 818.]

¹¹⁵"Luke described them as being 'more noble' than the Thessalonians. He used a word (*eugenesteros*) that originally meant high born but came to have a more general connotation of being open, tolerant, generous, having the qualities that go with 'good breeding.'⁶² Nowhere was this more evident than in their willingness to take Paul's scriptural exposition seriously. They did not accept his word uncritically but did their own examination of the Scriptures to see if they really did point to the death and resurrection of the Messiah as Paul claimed (cf. 17:3). This was no cursory investigation either, no weekly Sabbath service, as at Thessalonica. They met daily to search the Scriptures. No wonder so many contemporary Bible study groups name themselves 'Bereans.' The Berean Jews were a 'noble' example.⁶³" [John B. Polhill, vol. 26, *Acts*, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995), 363.]

and men of high standing. Literally Luke says many believed “of the Greeks -- women of high standing and not a few men.” Luke’s statement here τῶν Ἑλληνίδων γυναικῶν τῶν εὐσχημόνων, *Greek women of high standing*, is not the language of Gentile God-fearers worshipping in the Jewish synagogue. Rather, it refers to these women as wives of powerful and rich men in the city.¹¹⁶ Perhaps the second expression, καὶ ἀνδρῶν οὐκ ὀλίγοι, *and of the men not a few*, is intended to refer to their husbands. Concerning the Jews, πολλοὶ μὲν οὖν ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐπίστευσαν, *therefore many of them believed*, stands in stark contrast to τινες ἐξ αὐτῶν ἐπίεισθησαν, *some of them were persuaded*, among the Jews in Thessalonica (cf. 17:4).

At some point several weeks later word got back to Thessalonica that the missionaries were preaching the Gospel in Berea as well: Ὡς δὲ ἔγνωνσαν οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Θεσσαλονίκης Ἰουδαῖοι ὅτι καὶ ἐν τῇ Βεροίᾳ κατηγγέλη ὑπὸ τοῦ Παύλου ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ.¹¹⁷ This was not a happy moment for the synagogue leadership in Thessalonica who thought they were rid of Paul and his new teachings. So a group of them made the two day plus journey to Berea: ἦλθον κάκεῖ σαλεύοντες καὶ τaráσσοντες τοὺς ὄχλους, *they came there too, to stir up and incite the crowds*. This was turning into Iconium all over again for Paul (Ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν Ἰκονίῳ κατὰ τὸ αὐτὸ, *The same thing occurred in Iconium*; 14:1). Their tactic had worked in Thessalonica in forcing Paul to leave the city, so their intent was to do the same thing in Berea.

But they didn’t get the chance to repeat the crowd scene in Berea: εὐθέως δὲ τότε τὸν Παῦλον ἐξαπέστειλαν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ πορεύεσθαι ἕως ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν, *Then the brothers immediately sent Paul away to the coast*. The newly formed community of believers learned what was about to happen in advance, and took action to get Paul out of the city before trouble developed. Which way did Paul go when he left Berea?¹¹⁸ At first glance, it seems that he was headed for the port of Dium on the coast where he could catch a ship around to Athens. Considerable text variation in vv. 14-15 leave open the possibility that heading toward a port city on the coast was to mislead Paul’s opponents, and that actually Paul went by land on a major Roman road south to Athens.¹¹⁹ One likelihood, though, is that Sopater was one of the brothers who escorted



he left Berea?¹¹⁸ At first glance, it seems that he was headed for the port of Dium on the coast where he could catch a ship around to Athens. Considerable text variation in vv. 14-15 leave open the possibility that heading toward a port city on the coast was to mislead Paul’s opponents, and that actually Paul went by land on a major Roman road south to Athens.¹¹⁹ One likelihood, though, is that Sopater was one of the brothers who escorted

¹¹⁶Luke goes out of his way to stress the conversion of people of importance in these cities of Paul’s missionary work, and also to emphasize women converts: Acts 13:30; 16:14-15; 17:4; 17:12. The preaching of the Gospel was impacting people across the social classes of people.

¹¹⁷“ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ is one of Luke’s commonest terms for the Christian message as preached by the apostles and others.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 819.]

¹¹⁸“Paul’s coming to Athens appears to have been intended primarily to escape persecution in Macedonia; preaching in Athens was not part of his original plan. Presumably, when called to Macedonia (16:6–10), he had planned to follow the *Via Egnatia* all the way to Dyrrhachium, then cross the Adriatic to Italy, and so to Rome. When writing the Christians at Rome some six or seven years later, Paul speaks of having often planned to visit them but being unable to do so (Ro 1:13; 15:22–23). Provincial action in Macedonia appears to have thwarted his plans for a continued mission in Macedonia, and news of Claudius’s expulsion of the Jewish community in Rome (A.D. 49–50; see Ac 18:2) would have caused him to change his plans.” [Kenneth L. Barker, *Expositor’s Bible Commentary* (Abridged Edition: New Testament) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 475.]

¹¹⁹“This is expressed in the majority of MSS (Ψ 0120 *M sy^b*) by the phrase ὡς ἐπὶ τὴν θάλασσαν. This use of ὡς ἐπὶ is a standard Hellenistic construction meaning towards, sometimes against. See M. 3:321 and BDR § 453:4, n. 7, but especially Field (79): ‘Π. ὡς ἐπὶ ‘to go in the direction of’ a place, whether the person arrives there or not, is an excellent Greek idiom.’ As Field observes, Wettstein gives examples, and Field adds Pausanias 2:11:2, καταβαίνουσι δὲ ὡς ἐπὶ τὸ πεδίον, 3:20:3, ἰοῦσιν εὐθεῖαν ὡς ἐπὶ θάλασσαν; and other passages. ὡς is omitted by the Western text (D 049 pc gig sy^p), and in P⁷⁴ x A B E 33 81 323 945 1175 1739 al lat is replaced by ἕως. The short text (ἐπὶ alone) is quite intelligible: Paul is to go to the sea. But there is no good reason why ὡς ἐπὶ, if it had stood originally in the text, should have been disturbed, unless, as Field continues, the ‘excellent Greek idiom’ may not have been familiar to those scribes who changed ὡς into ἕως. Bruce (1:330) thinks that Paul’s companions acted ‘as if to conduct Paul to the sea’; that is, they were trying to put possible pursuers off the trail. ἕως may be an orthographical variant (or error) for ὡς, but it may be original and mean (in English

Paul away from harm (cf. Acts 20:4).

The two associates, Silas and Timothy, remain behind in the city, not sensing that they would be the target that Paul was: ὑπέμεινάν τε ὁ τε Σιλᾶς καὶ ὁ Τιμόθεος ἐκεῖ. The church would have some experienced leadership for the coming weeks, before they would leave to rejoin Paul at Athens: οἱ δὲ καθιστάνοντες τὸν Παῦλον ἤγαγον ἕως Ἀθηνῶν, καὶ λαβόντες ἐντολὴν πρὸς τὸν Σιλᾶν καὶ τὸν Τιμόθεον ἵνα ὡς τάχιστα ἔλθωσιν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐξήεσαν, *Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens; and after receiving instructions to have Silas and Timothy join him as soon as possible, they left him.*¹²⁰ When Paul left Beroea, he left a thriving congregation of both Jews and Gentiles which included individuals of significant standing in the city. To be sure, this could -- and probably was -- intimidating to those Jews in the synagogue who did not accept the Christian Gospel. Interestingly, no particular issue emerged in this congregation that would prompt Paul to have to address via a letter, while at Thessalonica two separate letters over the following months would be sent from Achaia back to this church in Macedonia. Perhaps, the absence of any letter from Paul speaks well of the stability and quality of faith dominating the church at Beroea. Could it be that this had its roots in their sensitivity to the scriptures?

6.1.4 Ministry in Achaia, Acts 17:15-18:17

Acts 17:15-18:17. 15 *Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens; and after receiving instructions to have Silas and Timothy join him as soon as possible, they left him.*

16 While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols. 17 So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and also in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. 18 Also some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debated with him. Some said, "What does this babbler want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities." (This was because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.) 19 So they took him and brought him to the Areopagus and asked him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? 20 It sounds rather strange to us, so we would like to know what it means." 21 Now all the Athenians and the foreigners living there would spend their time in nothing but telling or hearing something new.

22 Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. 23 For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. 24 The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, 25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. 26 From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, 27 so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. 28 For 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we too are his offspring.'

29 Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. 30 While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, 31 because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged

as awkward as the Greek would be) that Paul was accompanied as far as to the sea; that is, his companions saw him on board (cf. 20:38). He would reach the sea probably at Pydna, and sea travel would take him into a different jurisdiction (Hemer 116). The reference to the sea must almost certainly mean (unless we follow Bruce) that Paul, to avoid further trouble in northern Greece, went from Beroea to Athens by ship, avoiding the land journey through Thessaly (though for θάλασσαν Markland conjectures Θεσσαλίαν; see also the textual note on v. 15). Clark (366f.) argues that if Paul went by sea one would expect the port, Methone or Pydna, to be mentioned; and οἱ δὲ καθιστῶντες ... ἤγαγον (v. 15) suggests a land journey. 'There was a Roman road with stations and organized services from Pydna to Athens by way of Dium, Larisa, Demetrias, Opus, Chalcis, Thebes, and Oropus, the total distance being 222 miles.'" [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 819-20.]

¹²⁰The movements of Silas and Timothy during this period become difficult to trace with certainty. Most of this is due to very limited and often vague references both in Acts 17 and 18, along with First and Second Thessalonians. It seems that both rejoined Paul not in Athens but after he arrived at Corinth according to 18:5. But First Thess. 3:2 suggests that at least Timothy, if not Silas also, caught up with Paul in Athens. Assuming that at least Timothy caught up with Paul in Athens, he then returned to Macedonia in order to deliver First Thessalonians to the church there. Then he and Silas made their way south to Achaia again, this time rejoining Paul at Corinth, where one or both returned once more to Macedonia in order to deliver Second Thessalonians to the church. One would assume that they then rejoined Paul either in Corinth since he spent ἔτι προσημείνας ἡμέρας ἱκανὰς, *a considerable time*, or, possibly at Cenchræe, near Corinth as he was leaving for Syria via Ephesus in Asia. Some are convinced that Paul remained in Corinth for 18 months.

No mention is made of either Silas or Timothy during the remainder of the second missionary journey. When Paul leaves Corinth headed for Syria and the church at Antioch, Priscilla and Aquila (18:18-19) accompany him as far as Ephesus. That Luke would skip over most of the details about the activities of Paul's associates in Acts should not be surprising since his primary objective is to focus on Paul and how his ministry paralleled that of Peter.

in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

32 When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some scoffed; but others said, “We will hear you again about this.” 33 At that point Paul left them. 34 But some of them joined him and became believers, including Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

18.1 After this Paula left Athens and went to Corinth. 2 There he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, 3 and, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them, and they worked together—by trade they were tentmakers. 4 Every sabbath he would argue in the synagogue and would try to convince Jews and Greeks.

5 When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with proclaiming the word,^c testifying to the Jews that the Messiah was Jesus. 6 When they opposed and reviled him, in protest he shook the dust from his clothes and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” 7 Then he left the synagogue and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God; his house was next door to the synagogue. 8 Crispus, the official of the synagogue, became a believer in the Lord, together with all his household; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul became believers and were baptized. 9 One night the Lord said to Paul in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; 10 for I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to harm you, for there are many in this city who are my people.” 11 He stayed there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

12 But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal. 13 They said, “This man is persuading people to worship God in ways that are contrary to the law.” 14 Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of crime or serious villainy, I would be justified in accepting the complaint of you Jews; 15 but since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves; I do not wish to be a judge of these matters.” 16 And he dismissed them from the tribunal. 17 Then all of them seized Sosthenes, the official of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of these things.

15 οἱ δὲ καθιστάνοντες τὸν Παῦλον ἤγαγον ἕως Ἀθηνῶν, καὶ λαβόντες ἐντολὴν πρὸς τὸν Σιλᾶν καὶ τὸν Τιμόθεον ἵνα ὡς τάχιστα ἔλθωσιν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐξήεσαν.

16 Ἐν δὲ ταῖς Ἀθήναις ἐκδεχομένου αὐτοῦ τοῦ Παύλου παρωξύνετο τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ θεωροῦντος κατειδῶλον οὖσαν τὴν πόλιν. 17 διελέγετο μὲν οὖν ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις καὶ τοῖς σεβομένοις καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ κατὰ πᾶσαν ἡμέραν πρὸς τοὺς παρατυγχάνοντας. 18 τινὲς δὲ καὶ τῶν Ἐπικουρείων καὶ Στοϊκῶν φιλοσόφων συνέβαλλον αὐτῷ, καὶ τινες ἔλεγον· τί ἂν θέλοι ὁ σπερμολόγος οὗτος λέγειν; οἱ δὲ· ξένων δαιμονίων δοκεῖ καταγγελεὺς εἶναι, ὅτι τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ τὴν ἀνάστασιν εὐηγγελίζετο. 19 ἐπιλαβόμενοι τε αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν Ἄρειον πάγον ἤγαγον λέγοντες· δυνάμεθα γινῶναι τίς ἢ καινὴ αὐτῆ ἢ ὑπὸ σοῦ λαλουμένη διδασχῆ; 20 ξενίζοντα γὰρ τίνα εἰσφέρεις εἰς τὰς ἀκοὰς ἡμῶν· βουλόμεθα οὖν γινῶναι τίνα θέλει ταῦτα εἶναι. 21 Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ πάντες καὶ οἱ ἐπιδημοῦντες ξένοι εἰς οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἠκαίρουν ἢ λέγειν τι ἢ ἀκούειν τι καινότερον.

22 Σταθεῖς δὲ [ὁ] Παῦλος ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ Ἀρείου πάγου ἔφη· ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, κατὰ πάντα ὡς δεισιδαιμονεστέρους ὑμᾶς θεωρῶ. 23 διερχόμενος γὰρ καὶ ἀναθεωρῶν τὰ σεβάσματα ὑμῶν εὔρον καὶ βωμὸν ἐν ᾧ ἐπετέγγραπτο Ἄγνωστω θεῷ.

ὁ οὖν ἀγνοοῦντες εὐσεβεῖτε, τοῦτο ἐγὼ καταγγέλλω ὑμῖν. 24 ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιήσας τὸν κόσμον καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ, οὗτος οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς ὑπάρχων κύριος οὐκ ἐν χειροποιήτοις ναοῖς κατοικεῖ 25 οὐδὲ ὑπὸ χειρῶν ἀνθρωπίνων θεραπεύεται προσδεόμενός τις, αὐτὸς διδοὺς πᾶσι ζωὴν καὶ πνοὴν καὶ τὰ πάντα· 26 ἐποίησέν τε ἐξ ἑνὸς πᾶν ἔθνος ἀνθρώπων κατοικεῖν ἐπὶ παντὸς προσώπου τῆς γῆς, ὀρίσας προστεταγμένους καιροὺς καὶ τὰς ὁροθεσίας τῆς κατοικίας αὐτῶν 27 ζητεῖν τὸν θεόν, εἰ ἄρα γε ψηλαφήσειαν αὐτὸν καὶ εὔροιεν, καί γε οὐ μακρὰν ἀπὸ ἐνὸς ἐκάστου ἡμῶν ὑπάρχοντα.

28 ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμέν, ὡς καὶ τινες τῶν καθ’ ὑμᾶς ποιητῶν εἰρήκασιν· τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν.

29 γένος οὖν ὑπάρχοντες τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ὀφείλομεν νομίζειν χρυσῷ ἢ ἀργύρῳ ἢ λίθῳ, χαράγματι τέχνης καὶ ἐνθυμήσεως ἀνθρώπου, τὸ θεῖον εἶναι ὅμοιον. 30 τοὺς μὲν οὖν χρόνους τῆς ἀγνοίας ὑπεριδῶν ὁ θεός, τὰ νῦν παραγγέλλει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πάντας πανταχοῦ μετανοεῖν, 31 καθότι ἔστησεν ἡμέραν ἐν ἧ ἔλλει κρίνειν τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ, ἐν ἀνδρὶ ᾧ ὤρισεν, πίστιν παρασχῶν πᾶσιν ἀναστήσας αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν. 32 Ἀκούσαντες δὲ ἀνάστασιν νεκρῶν οἱ μὲν ἐχλεύαζον, οἱ δὲ εἶπαν· ἀκουσόμεθά σου περὶ τούτου καὶ πάλιν. 33 οὕτως ὁ Παῦλος ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν. 34 τινὲς δὲ ἄνδρες κοληθέντες αὐτῷ ἐπίστευσαν, ἐν οἷς καὶ Διονύσιος ὁ Ἀρεοπαγίτης καὶ γυνὴ ὀνόματι Δάμαρις καὶ ἕτεροι σὺν αὐτοῖς.

18.1 Μετὰ ταῦτα χωρισθεὶς ἐκ τῶν Ἀθηνῶν ἦλθεν εἰς Κόρινθον. 2 καὶ εὐρών τίνα Ἰουδαῖον ὀνόματι Ἀκύλαν, Ποντικὸν τῷ γένει προσφάτως ἐληλυθότα ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας καὶ Πρίσκιλλαν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, διὰ τὸ διατεταχέναι Κλαύδιον χωρίζεσθαι πάντας τοὺς Ἰουδαίους ἀπὸ τῆς Ῥώμης, προσῆλθεν αὐτοῖς 3 καὶ διὰ τὸ ὁμότεχνον εἶναι ἔμενεν παρ’ αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἠργάζετο· ἦσαν γὰρ σκηνοποιοὶ τῆ τέχνης. 4 διελέγετο δὲ ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ κατὰ πᾶν σάββατον ἐπειθέν τε Ἰουδαίους καὶ Ἑλληνας. 5 Ὡς δὲ κατήλθον ἀπὸ τῆς Μακεδονίας ὁ τε Σιλᾶς καὶ ὁ Τιμόθεος, συνείχετο τῷ λόγῳ ὁ

Παῦλος διαμαρτυρούμενος τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις εἶναι τὸν χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν. 6 ἀντιπασσομένων δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ βλασφημούντων ἐκτιναξάμενος τὰ ἱμάτια εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς· τὸ αἶμα ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν ὑμῶν· καθαρὸς ἐγὼ ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν εἰς τὰ ἔθνη πορεύσομαι. 7 καὶ μεταβὰς ἐκεῖθεν εἰσηλθεν εἰς οἰκίαν τινὸς ὀνόματι Τιτίου Ἰούστου σεβομένου τὸν θεόν, οὗ ἡ οἰκία ἦν συνομοροῦσα τῇ συναγωγῇ. 8 Κρίσπος δὲ ὁ ἀρχισυναγωγὸς ἐπίστευσεν τῷ κυρίῳ σὺν ὄλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ, καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν Κορινθίων ἀκούοντες ἐπίστευσαν καὶ ἐβαπτίζοντο. 9 Εἶπεν δὲ ὁ κύριος ἐν νυκτὶ δι' ὄραματος τῷ Παύλῳ· μὴ φοβοῦ, ἀλλὰ λάλει καὶ μὴ σιωπήσης, 10 διότι ἐγὼ εἰμι μετὰ σοῦ καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐπιθήσεται σοὶ τοῦ κακῶσαί σε, διότι λαὸς ἐστὶ μοι πολλὸς ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ. 11 Ἐκάθισεν δὲ ἐνιαυτὸν καὶ μῆνας ἕξ διδάσκων ἐν αὐτοῖς τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ.

12 Γαλλίωνος δὲ ἀνθυπάτου ὄντος τῆς Ἀχαΐας κατεπέστησαν ὁμοθυμαδὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ ἤγαγον αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸ βῆμα 13 λέγοντες ὅτι παρὰ τὸν νόμον ἀναπειθεὶ οὗτος τοὺς ἀνθρώπους σέβεσθαι τὸν θεόν. 14 μέλλοντος δὲ τοῦ Παύλου ἀνοίγειν τὸ στόμα εἶπεν ὁ Γαλλίων πρὸς τοὺς Ἰουδαίους· εἰ μὲν ἦν ἀδίκημά τι ἢ ῥαδιούργημα πονηρὸν, ὡς Ἰουδαῖοι, κατὰ λόγον ἂν ἀνεσχόμην ὑμῶν, 15 εἰ δὲ ζητήματά ἐστιν περὶ λόγου καὶ ὀνομάτων καὶ νόμου τοῦ καθ' ὑμᾶς, ὤψεσθε αὐτοί· κριτὴς ἐγὼ τούτων οὐ βούλομαι εἶναι. 16 καὶ ἀπήλασεν αὐτούς ἀπὸ τοῦ βήματος. 17 ἐπιλαβόμενοι δὲ πάντες Σωσθένην τὸν ἀρχισυναγωγὸν ἔτυπτον ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ βήματος· καὶ οὐδὲν τούτων τῷ Γαλλίῳ ἐμελεν.

Paul's ministry in the province of Achaia would center in two cities: Athens and Corinth. This was the heart of the Greek culture and tradition in the first century world. Here he would spend the greatest amount of time in any of the provinces on the second missionary journey. His experiences would be considerably different from those up to this point. And Corinth in Achaia would be the turning around point, i.e., the Derbe, of the second missionary journey. The general time frame is from late 49 to early 51 AD. He arrived in Jerusalem sometime around Passover in 51 AD before returning to Antioch in Syria where the journey had first begun.



The two cities of Athens and Corinth would present Paul with brand new challenges in preaching the Gospel. In Athens he came face to face with raw paganism at its worst, and coupled with intellectual elitism at its height. In Corinth, he faced paganism of high level religious devotion to Apollo among many others. The city was a bustling port city with lots of commerce, a military retirement center for the Roman army, a collecting pot of people of every kind from across the empire. The pioneering work of Paul in establishing the Christian congregations would flourish over the coming decades, but both congregations would be plagued with ongoing problems and difficulties, especially the one in Corinth. Eventually this congregation would consume more of Paul's time and effort than virtually any other one during his entire ministry.

6.1.4.1 Work in Athens, Acts 15:15-34; 1 Thess 3:1-10

Acts 17:15-34. 15 Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens; and after receiving instructions to have Silas and Timothy join him as soon as possible, they left him.

16 While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols. 17 So he argued in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and also in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there. 18 Also some Epicurean and Stoic philosophers debated with him. Some said, "What does this babbling man want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities." (This was because he was telling the good news about Jesus and the resurrection.) 19 So they took him and brought him to the Areopagus and asked him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? 20 It sounds rather strange to us, so we would like to know what it means." 21 Now all the Athenians and the foreigners living there would spend their time in nothing but telling or hearing something new.

22 Then Paul stood in front of the Areopagus and said, "Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. 23 For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. 24 The God who made the world and everything in it, he who is Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in shrines made by human hands, 25 nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mortals life and breath and all things. 26 From one ancestor he made all nations to inhabit the whole earth, and he allotted the times of their existence and the boundaries of the places where they would live, 27 so that they would search for God and perhaps grope for him and find him—though indeed he is not far from each one of us. 28 For 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we too are his offspring.'

29 Since we are God's offspring, we ought not to think that the deity is like gold, or silver, or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of mortals. 30 While God has overlooked the times of human ignorance, now he commands all people everywhere to repent, 31 because he has fixed a day on which he will have the world judged

in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and of this he has given assurance to all by raising him from the dead.”

32 When they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some scoffed; but others said, “We will hear you again about this.” 33 At that point Paul left them. 34 But some of them joined him and became believers, including Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

15 οἱ δὲ καθιστάνοντες τὸν Παῦλον ἤγαγον ἕως Ἀθηνῶν, καὶ λαβόντες ἐντολὴν πρὸς τὸν Σιλᾶν καὶ τὸν Τιμόθεον ἵνα ὡς τάχιστα ἔλθωσιν πρὸς αὐτὸν ἐξήεσαν.

16 Ἐν δὲ ταῖς Ἀθήναις ἐκδεχομένου αὐτοῦ τοῦ Παύλου παρωξύνετο τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ θεωροῦντος κατειδῶλον οὖσαν τὴν πόλιν. 17 διελέγετο μὲν οὖν ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις καὶ τοῖς σεβομένοις καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ κατὰ πᾶσαν ἡμέραν πρὸς τοὺς παρατυγχάνοντας. 18 τινὲς δὲ καὶ τῶν Ἑπικουρείων καὶ Στοϊκῶν φιλοσόφων συνέβαλλον αὐτῷ, καὶ τινες ἔλεγον· τί ἂν θέλοι ὁ σπερμολόγος οὗτος λέγειν; οἱ δὲ· ξένων δαιμονίων δοκεῖ καταγγελεὺς εἶναι, ὅτι τὸν Ἰησοῦν καὶ τὴν ἀνάστασιν εὐηγγελίζετο. 19 ἐπιλαβόμενοι τε αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸν Ἄρειον πάγον ἤγαγον λέγοντες· δυνάμεθα γινῶναι τίς ἢ καινὴ αὐτῆ ἢ ὑπὸ σοῦ λαλουμένη διδασχὴ; 20 ξενίζοντα γὰρ τίνα εἰσφέρεις εἰς τὰς ἀκοὰς ἡμῶν· βουλόμεθα οὖν γινῶναι τίνα θέλει ταῦτα εἶναι. 21 Ἀθηναῖοι δὲ πάντες καὶ οἱ ἐπιδημοῦντες ξένοι εἰς οὐδὲν ἕτερον ἠκαίρουν ἢ λέγειν τι ἢ ἀκούειν τι καινότερον.

22 Σταθεῖς δὲ [ὁ] Παῦλος ἐν μέσῳ τοῦ Ἀρείου πάγου ἔφη· ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, κατὰ πάντα ὡς δεισιδαιμονεστέρους ὑμᾶς θεωρῶ. 23 διερχόμενος γὰρ καὶ ἀναθεωρῶν τὰ σεβάσματα ὑμῶν εὗρον καὶ βωμὸν ἐν ᾧ ἐπεγέγραπτο· Ἀγνώστῳ θεῷ.

ὁ οὖν ἀγνοοῦντες εὐσεβεῖτε, τοῦτο ἐγὼ καταγγέλλω ὑμῖν. 24 ὁ θεὸς ὁ ποιήσας τὸν κόσμον καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτῷ, οὗτος οὐρανοῦ καὶ γῆς ὑπάρχων κύριος οὐκ ἐν χειροποιήτοις ναοῖς κατοικεῖ 25 οὐδὲ ὑπὸ χειρῶν ἀνθρωπίνων θεραπεύεται προσδεόμενός τις, αὐτὸς διδοὺς πᾶσι ζωὴν καὶ πνοὴν καὶ τὰ πάντα· 26 ἐποίησέν τε ἐξ ἑνὸς πᾶν ἔθνος ἀνθρώπων κατοικεῖν ἐπὶ παντὸς προσώπου τῆς γῆς, ὀρίσας προστεταγμένους καιροὺς καὶ τὰς ὁροθεσίας τῆς κατοικίας αὐτῶν 27 ζητεῖν τὸν θεόν, εἰ ἄρα γε ψηλαφήσειαν αὐτὸν καὶ εὔροιεν, καί γε οὐ μακρὰν ἀπὸ ἐνὸς ἐκάστου ἡμῶν ὑπάρχοντα.

28 ἐν αὐτῷ γὰρ ζῶμεν καὶ κινούμεθα καὶ ἐσμέν, ὡς καὶ τινες τῶν καθ’ ὑμᾶς ποιητῶν εἰρήκασιν· τοῦ γὰρ καὶ γένος ἐσμέν.

29 γένος οὖν ὑπάρχοντες τοῦ θεοῦ οὐκ ὀφείλομεν νομίζειν χρυσῷ ἢ ἀργύρῳ ἢ λίθῳ, χαράγματι τέχνης καὶ ἐνθυμήσεως ἀνθρώπου, τὸ θεῖον εἶναι ὁμοιον. 30 τοὺς μὲν οὖν χρόνους τῆς ἀγνοίας ὑπεριδὼν ὁ θεός, τὰ νῦν παραγγέλλει τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πάντας πανταχοῦ μετανοεῖν, 31 καθότι ἔστησεν ἡμέραν ἐν ἧ ἡμέλῃ κρίνειν τὴν οἰκουμένην ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ, ἐν ἀνδρὶ ᾧ ὤρισεν, πίστιν παρασχὼν πᾶσιν ἀναστήσας αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν. 32 Ἀκούσαντες δὲ ἀνάστασιν νεκρῶν οἱ μὲν ἐχλεύαζον, οἱ δὲ εἶπαν· ἀκουσόμεθά σου περὶ τούτου καὶ πάλιν. 33 οὕτως ὁ Παῦλος ἐξήλθεν ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν. 34 τινὲς δὲ ἄνδρες κολληθέντες αὐτῷ ἐπίστευσαν, ἐν οἷς καὶ Διονύσιος ὁ Ἀρεοπαγίτης καὶ γυνὴ ὀνόματι Δάμαρις καὶ ἕτεροι σὺν αὐτοῖς.

1 Thess. 3:1-10. 3.1 Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we decided to be left alone in Athens; 2 and we sent Timothy, our brother and co-worker for God in proclaiming the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you for the sake of your faith, 3 so that no one would be shaken by these persecutions. Indeed, you yourselves know that this is what we are destined for. 4 In fact, when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we were to suffer persecution; so it turned out, as you know. 5 For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith; I was afraid that somehow the tempter had tempted you and that our labor had been in vain.

6 But Timothy has just now come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love. He has told us also that you always remember us kindly and long to see us—just as we long to see you. 7 For this reason, brothers and sisters,^b during all our distress and persecution we have been encouraged about you through your faith. 8 For we now live, if you continue to stand firm in the Lord. 9 How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? 10 Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

3.1 Διὸ μηκέτι στέγοντες εὐδοκήσαμεν καταλειφθῆναι ἐν Ἀθήναις μόνοι 2 καὶ ἐπέμψαμεν Τιμόθεον, τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν καὶ συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἰς τὸ στηρίξαι ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλέσαι ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν 3 τὸ μηδένα σαίνεσθαι ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν ταύταις. αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἶδατε ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο κείμεθα· 4 καὶ γὰρ ὅτε πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἦμεν, προελέγομεν ὑμῖν ὅτι μέλλομεν θλίβεσθαι, καθὼς καὶ ἐγένετο καὶ οἶδατε. 5 διὰ τοῦτο κάγω μηκέτι στέγων ἐπέμψα εἰς τὸ γινῶναι τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν, μή πως ἐπέiraσεν ὑμᾶς ὁ πειράζων καὶ εἰς κενὸν γένηται ὁ κόπος ἡμῶν.

6 Ἄρτι δὲ ἐλθόντος Τιμοθέου πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀφ’ ὑμῶν καὶ εὐαγγελισαμένου ἡμῖν τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην ὑμῶν καὶ ὅτι ἔχετε μνείαν ἡμῶν ἀγαθὴν πάντοτε, ἐπιποθοῦντες ἡμᾶς ἰδεῖν καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑμᾶς, 7 διὰ τοῦτο παρεκλήθημεν, ἀδελφοί, ἐφ’ ὑμῖν ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ ἀνάγκῃ καὶ θλίψει ἡμῶν διὰ τῆς ὑμῶν πίστεως, 8 ὅτι νῦν ζῶμεν ἐὰν ὑμεῖς στήκετε ἐν κυρίῳ. 9 τίνα γὰρ εὐχαριστίαν δυνάμεθα τῷ θεῷ ἀναπαροδοῦναι περὶ ὑμῶν ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ χαρᾷ ἣν χαίρομεν δι’ ὑμᾶς ἐμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν, 10 νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ δεόμενοι εἰς τὸ ἰδεῖν ὑμῶν τὸ πρόσωπον καὶ καταρτίσαι τὰ ὑστερήματα τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν;

Paul arrived in Athens¹²¹ with the help of brothers from Berea, and without Timothy and Silas. One note

¹²¹ Ἀθῆναι, ὧν, αἱ (Hom. et al.; Philo, Joseph.) *Athens*, capital of Attica **Ac 17:15f; 18:1; 1 Th 3:1** (also in subscr. to 1 and 2 Th and Hb). Cp. Haenchen on Ac 17:15 (lit.); O’Broneer, BA 21, ’58, 2–28.—DDD s.v. Athena.

about the way Luke sets up the account of ministry in Athens. The heart of the text in vv. 16-34 is a synopsis of Paul's sermon at the Areopagus in vv. 22-31. It is preceded by a narrative introduction in vv. 16-21, and a narrative conclusion in vv. 32-34 with some extension in 18:1. This is a 'missionary sermon' given to pagans, rather than to Jews. Consequently the approach is substantially different than the sermon in Pisidian Antioch when Paul spoke to a synagogue audience (13:16-41). A much briefer summary of a similar setting is given about Paul's preaching to the non-Jews at Lystra, also on the first missionary journey (14:15-17). To non-Jews Paul's appeal centered on recognizing the presence and existence of God in the natural world. To the synagogue audience, the emphasis was on divine revelation based on the Old Testament scriptures and how Christianity completed and fulfilled those prophecies.



City model of ancient Athens

The city of Athens in the mid first century was living largely in its past¹²² and was trapped in the mediocrity of little growth or advancement.¹²³ Its libraries were no longer the largest or best, both Alexandria and Tarsus surpassed them in size and valued holdings. It thus was not the dominant center of Greek learning in the empire now, also it remained important for this. The moral atmosphere had degenerated to that of a pig sty. Religious devotion to the hundreds of Greek gods and goddesses was still strong but weakening from earlier levels. The Roman elites still catored to Athens largely because of its legacy of culture and religion. But it had little to offer the world at this point in time.¹²⁴ To Paul, as well as many others in the first century Roman culture, it was a grand

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 24.]

¹²²“In Paul’s day Athens was no longer the glory of the ancient world, as it had been in the fifth and fourth centuries B.C. The architecture of fifth-century Athens, its temples and deities, its theater and poetry, its politicians, historians, and orators had all contributed to that glory. In the fourth century its renown continued because of its prosperity, trade, industry, its philosophers (Plato, Aristotle), and its philosophical schools (Stoic, Epicurean). Toward the end of that century, Macedonia began to dominate Greece with the rise of the dynasty of Philip, and then with the exploits of Alexander the Great. After 228 B.C. Athens became a free-city state, which lived on its past glory. In 88 Athens sided with Mithridates VI against Rome, but it was reduced by Sulla to Roman occupation and control in 87–86. The people of Athens pleaded with him to respect its past glory, but Sulla retorted that he had come to punish rebels, not to learn ancient history. In time, Corinth, or rather Neocorinth, came to outshine Athens and had become politically more important in the eastern Mediterranean world.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 601.]

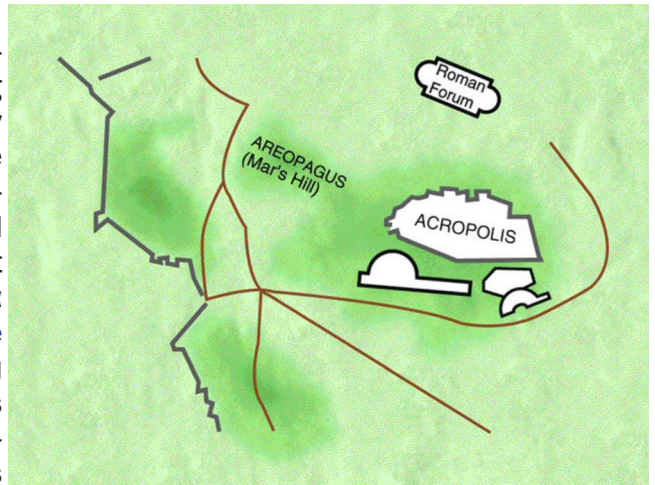
¹²³“ATHENS (PLACE) [Gk Athēnai (Ἀθῆναι)]. ATHENIAN. The polis (city-state) of the Athenians which unified the peninsula of Attica at an early date, thereby creating a political entity geographically defined by sea and mountain with an area of approximately 1,000 square miles. The most prominent topographical feature of the city itself (37°59’N; 23°44’E), situated 3–5 miles inland from its harborage on the Saronic Gulf to its W, was the Acropolis, a precipitous mass of rock around which the city spread out in roughly circular fashion. Lower than the Acropolis and a short distance to the NW is the Areopagus, or Mars’ Hill, where in A.D. 51 St. Paul preached his sermon on the unknown god (Acts 17:16–34). The city wall, originally built in the early 5th century B.C. with a circumference of 5–6 miles, reached its greatest extent in the 2d century A.D., when the Roman emperor Hadrian added a segment in the shape of a polygon in the W. Only the vine, the fig, and the olive could thrive in the thin soil, rocky terrain, and generally dry climate of Attica, whose chief natural resources were rich supplies of clay and building stone and the mines at Laurium, which yielded a large quantity of silver into Roman times.” [Hubert M. Jr. Martin, “Athens (Place)” In vol. 1, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 513.]

¹²⁴“Athens remained at peace with the Antigonids until Philip V invaded Attica a few months before the outbreak of the Second Macedonian War (200–197 B.C.), his disastrous conflict with Rome. Athens sided with Rome, endured Philip’s repeated devastation of the Athenian countryside, and rejoiced with the other Greek states when the victorious Roman general Flamininus proclaimed their freedom at the Isthmian Games of 196 B.C. Athens was again allied with Rome when the latter defeated Philip’s son and heir Perseus in the Third Macedonian War (171–168 B.C.) and then converted his kingdom into republics. On this occasion (166 B.C.), Athens was rewarded more tangibly for its loyalty to Rome, and was given possession of the island of Delos, now a free port. Athens nevertheless severed its friendship with Rome in 88 B.C., when the nationalists exerted themselves one last time and seized control of the government from the pro-Roman oligarchs. They immediately accepted an alliance with Mithridates of Pontus, who was already in the process of invading Greece and was now able to use Piraeus as his base of operations. The Roman general Sulla soon drove Mithridates out of Greece, but Athens was stubbornly defended by the nationalists and had to be taken by storm (86 B.C.). Given the ancient protocol for dealing with cities so captured, Sulla was benign in his treatment of Athens: his soldiers were allowed to loot and massacre for a while and the ringleaders of the uprising were executed, but no further punishment was exacted; with the oligarchs restored to power, the city was left in possession of its former liberty.

“As Athens recovered from the devastation of the Mithridatic fiasco (the city’s final attempt at political action independent of the Romans), it became more than ever a cultural center and university town, where the study of philosophy and rhetoric flourished. It became the place to which Roman senators and other wealthy foreigners sent their sons to study (and came themselves to visit and to

old city whose past gave it importance in the present.¹²⁵

Luke characterizes Paul's stay in the city with the introductory phrase: 'Εν δὲ ταῖς Ἀθήναις ἐκδεχομένου αὐτοῦ τοῦ Παύλου, *While Paul was waiting for them in Athens*. Timothy and Silas were still in Beroea, but were expected to re-join the apostle in Athens so they could continue their missionary activities. Thinking it would not be long before they arrived, Paul contented himself by taking a look around the city. But what he saw was deeply disturbing to him: παρωξύνετο τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτοῦ ἐν αὐτῷ θεωροῦντος κατείδωλον οὔσαν τὴν πόλιν, *he was deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols*. Having grown up in the Diaspora, Paul was quite familiar with idols to pagan gods, but the quantity of them in one city was overwhelming to him. Here was raw, superstitious paganism at its worst.¹²⁶ The glorious culture and other positive contributions of the Athenians took a back seat to the horrific idolatry so obvious in the city.



Finding a Jewish synagogue in the city, Paul began presenting the Gospel to the Jews (v. 17). Interestingly, there were God-fearing Gentiles present at the synagogue as well. Also, -- and this is a new pattern for the apostle -- he daily went into the ἀγορᾶ, *market place* (the Roman Forum on the above map), to present the Gospel as well. Interestingly, Luke adds the touch πρὸς τοὺς παρατυγχάνοντας, *with those who happened to be there*. And in Athens there would always be someone present with interest in hearing a speaker, especially in the mornings when the market would be in full operation.¹²⁷ From Luke's narrative, evidently Paul spoke in the synagogue on Friday evenings when the Jewish community gathered for prayer and study of the Torah, and then used the other

patronize). Hellenistic kings had done so in the past and so, before long, would Roman emperors. Julius Caesar pardoned Athens for following Pompey in 49–48 B.C., as did Octavian and Antony for espousing the cause of the republican Brutus in 44–42 B.C. The favors with which Antony then courted Athens while he ruled the East came to an end only when Octavian, soon to be Augustus, defeated him at Actium in 31 B.C., ushering in the period of the Roman Empire. Although Octavian deprived Athens of the island of Aegina (which Antony had given to Athens) and imposed some economic restrictions, he did not otherwise penalize the city for supporting his rival; indeed, he even confirmed Athenian possession of Attica and 8 islands, including Salamis and Delos. Athens in fact was never incorporated into the Roman provincial system and enjoyed the privileged status of *civitas foederata*, which gave Athens judicial authority over its own citizens and exempted them from the obligation to pay taxes to Rome.

“Athens lost some of its artistic treasures to Caligula and Nero, but the emperors of the 1st century otherwise treated the city with deference, and at the turn of the century (A.D. 98–117) Trajan attempted to rectify the city's fiscal disrepair, which had been initiated by Sulla's depredations and aggravated by the exactions imposed on Athens during the civil wars marking the end of the Roman republic (49–31 B.C.). But the completion of Trajan's task was left to his philhellenic successor Hadrian (A.D. 117–138), who, in the most-favored-city tradition of Antigonos Gonatas, became Athens' grandest patron ever. Hadrian engaged in a monumental building program intended to render the city worthy to be the material and spiritual seat of his Union of the Panhellenes (created for the purpose of revitalizing Greek civilization). Imperial favors continued under Hadrian's successors Antoninus Pius (A.D. 138–161), who endowed a chair of rhetoric, and Marcus Aurelius (A.D. 161–180), who added 4 chairs of philosophy and thereby transformed Athens into a true university.”

[Hubert M. Jr. Martin, “Athens (Place)” In vol. 1, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 514-15.]

¹²⁵“When Paul came to Athens, its population probably numbered no more than ten thousand. Yet it had a glorious past on which it continued to live. Its temples and statuary were related to the worship of the Greek pantheon, and its culture was pagan.” [Kenneth L. Barker, *Expositor's Bible Commentary* (Abridged Edition: New Testament) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1994), 476.]

¹²⁶Some ancient historians had described this as well: “On this subject, compare Livy 45.27: “Athens ... has ... statues of gods and men — statues notable for every sort of material and artistry” (*Athenas ... habentes ... simulacra deorum hominumque omni genere et materiae et artium insignia*); compare also Strabo 9.396; *Pausanias* 1.17.1.” [Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel and Donald H. Juel, Hermeneia—a Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 138.]

¹²⁷“ἀγορά occurs in Acts only here and at 16:19. Both verb and noun recall the archetypal philosophical figure of Socrates, who was always available for discussion in the public places of Athens. In Xenophon, *Memorabilia* 1:1:10, ἀγορά is used in the first instance to denote time: πληθούσης ἀγορᾶς ἐκεῖ φανερός ἦν, When the market was in full swing (i.e. in the morning) he (Socrates) was to be seen there (i.e. in the market); cf. the preceding clause, πρῶι τε γὰρ εἰς τοὺς περιπάτους καὶ τὰ γυμνάσια ἦει. For διαλέγεσθαι see e.g. Plato, *Apology* 33a, οὐδὲ χρήματα μὲν λαμβάνων διαλέγομαι; 19d, ἐμοῦ ... ἀκηκόατε διαλεγόμενου. Cf. 38a. For the dialectical method (which grew out of market-place arguments), *Republic* 454a, οὐκ ἐρίζειν ἀλλὰ διαλέγεσθαι.

[C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 828-29.]

days for speaking at the market place. How long this pattern prevailed is not indicated by Luke, but seemingly went on for a period of several weeks or longer. Where Paul lodged during this time is not indicated, although one would suspect that soon after converts to Christianity came about, one of them opened his home to the apostle. From all indications Paul was alone during this early period at Athens. The brothers from Berea had escorted him to Athens and then returned home. Timothy and Silas are not yet in Athens. We don't know where Luke was during this time, since this is not in the 'we-section' of the Acts narrative.

In both places Luke characterizes Paul's presentation as διαλέγετο, *was discussing*. The verb διαλέγομαι literally means to exchange ideas through dialogue. Sometimes this takes on the tone of arguing, but mostly it means discussing. The verb reflects the ancient cultural understanding that even teaching was not a monologue but a dialogue. Clearly in the setting of both the synagogue and the Athenian market place forum, the presentation of a viewpoint would of necessity include answering questions about details and defending the viewpoint when alternative views were proposed by listeners.

Among those at the market place listening to Paul were representatives of two philosophical schools. This would not have been particularly unusual, since the market place provided a place where individuals could espouse whatever ideas they desired. The two groups who happened to be represented on this particular day when Paul showed up were the Epicureans¹²⁸ and the Stoics.¹²⁹ Luke doesn't describe Paul's impact at the synagogue, but indicates some success in the market place. These philosophers' interest was deeper and Luke characterizes their exchanges with Paul as συνέβαλλον αὐτῷ.¹³⁰ This verb συμβάλλω literally means to throw things together for comparison and evaluation. That is, these two groups of philosophers, φιλοσόφων, were carefully critiquing Paul's ideas in comparison to their own philosophical sets of thinking. The reaction was mixed: καί τινες ἔλεγον· τί ἂν θέλοι ὁ σπερμολόγος οὗτος λέγειν; οἱ δὲ· ξένων δαιμονίων δοκεῖ καταγγελεὺς εἶναι, *Some said, "What does this babbler want to say?" Others said, "He seems to be a proclaimer of foreign divinities."* For some the irrationality

¹²⁸ Ἐπικούρειος, ου, ὁ (Numenius [s. on στρεβλόω 2] 1, 3 p. 63; Alciphron 3, 19, 3; Diog. L. 10, 3; 31; SIG 1227 φιλόσοφος Ἐπικούρειος; IGR IV, 997; Jos., Ant. 10, 277; 19, 32; Just., A II, 15, 3. For the spelling [-ριος Tdf., W-H., Sod.] W-S. §5, 13e; cp. Philo, Poster. Cai. 2) *an Epicurean*, a follower of Epicurus **Ac 17:18** (s. comm.).—RHicks, EncRelEth V 324–30; WdeWitt, E. and His Philosophy '54; WBarclay, ET 72, '60, 78–81; 72, '61, 101–4; 146–49; EAsmis, Epicurus' Scientific Method '84; RAC V 681–819.—M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 373.]

¹²⁹ Στωϊκός (the form Στωϊκός, which is also attested, is more correct, but not necessarily the original one [Just., Tat., Ath.; s. B-D-F §35, 1; Mlt-H. 73 prefers Στω-as the orig.]), ἡ, ὁν *Stoic* (Dionys. Hal., Comp. Verb. 2 p. 7, 3 Us.-Rad.; Diog. L. 4, 67; Philo; Jos., Vi. 12; Just.) Στωϊκοὶ φιλόσοφοι, mentioned beside Epicureans **Ac 17:18**. MPohlenz, Die Stoa3 '71/72; WBarclay, ET 72, '61, 5 articles passim, 164–294.—M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 946.]

¹³⁰ Although the two philosophies were significantly different from one another, they shared enough in common out of their Greek heritage from the classical era to arrive at a similar conclusion about the 'irrationality' of the Gospel message being presented by the apostle Paul.

Stoicism: "Stoicism is a modern term referring to the philosophy of the Stoic school. This school took its name from the stoa poikilē, a decoratively painted colonnade in Athens, where Zeno began his philosophic lectures and discussions around 301/300 B.C. (for the name, see Hobein 1931:40–47). The school he set up lasted until the second half of the 3d century A.D. Historians like to subdivide it into the periods of the old, middle (from Panaetius onwards), and late (imperial age) Stoa (Colish 1985:7). This is a controversial division, which is not used as the basis for the following overview. Source material is only satisfactory for the Roman imperial period. All earlier Stoics are only documented by quotations and summaries provided by authors of a later period (details in Long 1974:115–17)."

[Thomas Schmeller, "Stoics, Stoicism" In vol. 6, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 210.]

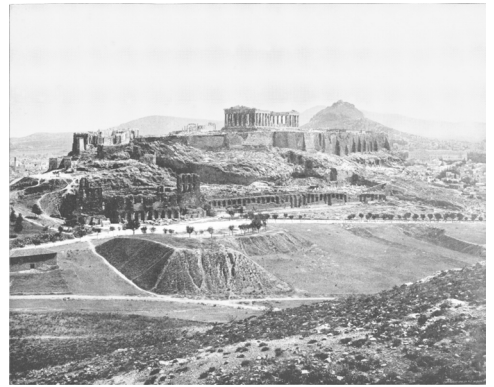
Epicureans. "EPICUREANS. Some of the philosophers whom Paul encountered at Athens (Acts 17:18) were of this school, whose best-known disciple is the Roman poet Lucretius. The founder, Epicurus, was born in 341 BC on the island of Samos. His early studies under Nausiphanes, a disciple of Democritus, taught him to regard the world as the result of the random motion and combination of atomic particles. He lived for a time in exile and poverty. Gradually he gathered round him a circle of friends and began to teach his distinctive doctrines. In 306 he established himself in Athens at the famous 'Garden' which became the headquarters of the school. He died in 270 after great suffering from an internal complaint, but in peace of mind."

[M. H. Cressey, "Epicureans" In *New Bible Dictionary*, ed. D. R. W. Wood, I. H. Marshall, A. R. Millard et al., 3rd ed. (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 330.]

The fundamental difference between these two philosophical schools lay in their core understanding of life. For the Stoics the goal is to conform one's life to the life force, i.e., the logos, that sustains and controls the universe. But for the Epicureans everything was relative. The goal was securing pleasure through detaching oneself from the material world. Everything was 'this world' oriented, with no belief in an after life. Here would have been a major point of 'irrationality' for Christianity in the minds of both groups of philosophers.

of the Gospel message to their system of thinking was incomprehensible and made Paul sound like a σπερμολόγος, *babbler*.¹³¹ However, for some others, the presentation sounded like this Jew was advocating some kind of strange god: οἱ δὲ ξένων δαιμονίων δοκεῖ καταγγελεὺς εἶναι. This posed a more serious issue, since introducing a new religion in Athens without official approval was strictly illegal.¹³²

Consequently Paul was escorted, ἐπιλαβόμενοι, to the τὸν Ἄρειον πάγον where he was given opportunity to officially explain his message (v. 19): δυνάμεθα γνῶναι τίς ἡ καινὴ αὕτη ἢ ὑπὸ σοῦ λαλουμένη διδασχῆ; “*May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting?* The place where he was taken was the Ἄρειος πάγος, *Areopagus*, or literally, *the Hill of Ares*.¹³³



It was a more formal location for public debate, but more importantly it was the meeting place of the council of Athens who were charged with enforcing the laws of the city as well as public teaching in the city. Verse twenty provides the motivation behind asking Paul to speak: ξενίζοντα γάρ τινα εἰσφέρεις εἰς τὰς ἀκοὰς ἡμῶν· βουλόμεθα οὖν γνῶναι τίνα θέλει ταῦτα εἶναι, “*It sounds rather strange to us, so we would like to know what it means.*” Is this mere curiosity or a preliminary examination for possible charges against Paul? Scholarly opinion is divided here. Some of Luke’s terminology suggests a trial, but his comment in verse twenty-one goes against this. The likelihood is that of curiosity but with the clear thought of possibly finding something illegal about what Paul was advocating.¹³⁴

Paul’s speech in vv. 22-31 represents the apostle’s highly creative manner in addressing an audience with no Jewish background or understanding of the Jewish scriptures. The essential strategy is similar to what Paul said to the non-Jewish audience at Lystra on the first missionary journey (14:15-17).¹³⁵ He appeals to the

¹³¹σπερμολόγος, ον (σπέρμα, λέγω, lit. ‘picking up seeds’; of birds, Alex. of Myndos [I A.D.] in Athen. 9, 39 388a; Plut., Demetr. 902 [28, 5]) subst. of a kind of bird, the ‘rook’ (Aristoph.; Aristot.; Lynceus fr. Samos [280 B.C.] in Athen. 8, 32, 344c), in pejorative imagery of persons whose communication lacks sophistication and seems to pick up scraps of information here and there *scrapmonger, scavenger* (s. Goodsp, Probs. [citing Browning: ‘picker-up of learning’s crumbs’] 132f, and s. the ref. to Eustath. below.—Demosth. 18, 127 σπερμολ. περίτριμμα ἀγορᾶς; Dionys. Hal. 19, 5, 3 [=17, 8]; Eustath. on Od. 5, 490 σπερμολόγοι· οἱ περὶ τὰ ἐμπόρια καὶ ἀγορὰς διατριβόντες διὰ τὸ ἀναλέγεσθαι τὰ ἐκ τῶν φορτίων ἀπορρέοντα καὶ διὰ ζῆν ἐκ τούτων = σπερμολόγοι are people who spend their time around stores and markets to pick up scraps from the produce and live off them; Philo, Leg. ad Gai. 203) Ac 17:18 (Norden, Agn. Th. 333; Beginn. IV, 211.—WSchmid, Philol. 95, ’42, 82f). Engl. synonyms include ‘gossip’, ‘babbler’, ‘chatterer’; but these terms miss the imagery of unsystematic gathering.—DELG s.v. σπεῖρω. M-M. Spicq.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 937.]

¹³²“To some, he is yet another dilettante, while others gain the impression that he is introducing new gods. The latter was a capital offense in classical Athens, the very crime for which Socrates had been executed.⁵ To those familiar with this history — anyone with a modest Greek education — this is an ominous development. Alarm quickens when Paul is brought before the ancient and venerable Council of the Areopagus, where he is requested to provide an explanation.⁶⁷ [Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary on the Book of Acts*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 425.]

¹³³“The Areopagus, or Mars’ Hill, was one of the more prominent topographical features of ancient Athens. It reaches a height of 377 ft. and appears to have received its name from an association with Ares, the Greek god of war, though some moderns have derived the name from Arai (‘Curses’), interpreted as a term designating the Furies, whose cave was located on the NE slope of the hill. It was on the Areopagus that St. Paul stood in A.D. 51 when he delivered his sermon on the unknown god (Acts 17:19–22; Gärtner 1955: 45–65). The Acropolis, some 140 ft. higher, stands a short distance to the SE; and the agora, where Paul talked with passersby and disputed with Stoic and Epicurean philosophers before being taken to the Areopagus (Acts 17:16–18), spreads out below it almost directly to the north. On his ascent from the agora, Paul probably would have rounded the precipitous NE brow of the hill, the Cave of the Furies above him and to his right, and would have climbed toward the summit from the extreme SE by the stairway cut into the rock that is still in use today. (For a map, see ATHENS.) As they had since classical times, the slopes of the Areopagus constituted a residential area when Paul was in Athens.” [Hubert M. Jr. Martin, “Areopagus (Place)” In vol. 1, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 370.]

¹³⁴“In this august setting, Paul will show that Christianity represents Greek *paideia* (culture) and is not a vulgar foreign superstition.³⁸ That is one reason for the numerous evocations of Socrates.³⁹ ‘The Lukan Paul stands before the body responsible for the regulation of religion in Athens, faced with the same type of question Socrates had faced, a charge that led to his death.’⁴⁰ Verses 19b–20* continue this theme. In this ABA sequence the indirect questions frame the phrase ‘propounding alien ideas’ (ξενίζοντα ... εἰσφέρεις), both evocative of Socrates.⁴¹” [Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary on the Book of Acts*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 428-29.]

¹³⁵Acts 14:15-17 NRSV. 15 Friends, why are you doing this? We are mortals just like you, and we bring you good news, that you should turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all that is in them. 16 In past generations he allowed all the nations to follow their own ways; 17 yet he has not left himself without a witness in doing good —

existence of God in the material world around them. As would be appropriate in a more formal speech situation, Paul begins by complementing his audience:

22 Athenians, I see how extremely religious you are in every way. 23 For as I went through the city and looked carefully at the objects of your worship, I found among them an altar with the inscription, 'To an unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you.'

22 ἄνδρες Ἀθηναῖοι, κατὰ πάντα ὡς δεισιδαιμονεστέρους ὑμᾶς θεωρῶ. 23 διερχόμενος γὰρ καὶ ἀναθεωρῶν τὰ σεβάσματα ὑμῶν εὔρον καὶ βωμὸν ἐν ᾧ ἐπεγέγραπτο· Ἄγνωστω θεῷ. ὃ οὖν ἀγνοοῦντες εὔσεβεῖτε, τοῦτο ἐγὼ καταγγέλλω ὑμῖν.

Very cleverly he found a natural reference point in the city that enabled him to get into his message about God. He speaks of the Athenians as being religious, but he carefully avoids terminology used elsewhere in the NT to suggest authentic religious devotion. Rather he uses ὡς δεισιδαιμονεστέρους ὑμᾶς, *how very religious you are*.¹³⁶ To his audience it communicated something positive, but Paul avoids affirming a genuine religion on their part. His discovery of a statue with the inscription Ἄγνωστω θεῷ, *To the unknown god*, provided him with a good entrée to his speech: τοῦτο ἐγὼ καταγγέλλω ὑμῖν, *this I proclaim to you*.

His speech then centers around making known to his audience this 'unknown god' in vv. 24-29. His focus is on God as Creator who is in absolute control as Lord. Consequently, He cannot be contained in any temple or shrine nor is He dependent in any way on humans. To the contrary, He is the source of life to all His creation including every human being. In His plan He created all nations and established their places of existence on earth. His objective was that all humans would reach out to Him. Indeed, that would not be hard since God "is not far from each one of us." Paul even quotes a Greek poet, τινες τῶν καθ' ὑμᾶς ποιητῶν, who was Aratus in his *Phaenomena* 5.¹³⁷ The implication of God as all powerful Creator means that we must not conceptualize God in terms of some kind of statue made of material substance and conceived in human imagination. Here Paul reflects his Jewish heritage against images of God in any way.

God has patiently not poured out His wrath on these making of idols in the past. But now the divine command is for all people to repent, μετανοεῖν, of such non-sense. The incentive for repentance is the coming Day of Final Judgment. This judgment will be done ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ, *in righteousness*. And this judgment will be done by ἐν ἀνδρὶ ᾧ ὤρισεν, *by a man whom He appointed*. The certainty of this coming judgment through Jesus Christ is given in the resurrection of Christ from the dead: πίστιν παρασχὼν πᾶσιν ἀναστήσας αὐτὸν ἐκ νεκρῶν. With clarity and directness Paul moved from the unknown god to God as Creator and Judge to Jesus Christ raised from the dead.

At the mention of the resurrection this Greek crowd interrupted Paul's speech with mocking disbelief. Their dualistic Greek heritage from Platonic dualism had convinced them that union of body and soul was bad, and that death was a liberation of the soul from the corrupt body. The idea of re-uniting these two elements again in resurrection seemed utterly ridiculous. But not all responded in mockery, ἐχλεύαζον.¹³⁸ Luke says that some *giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, and filling you with food and your hearts with joy*.

ἄνδρες, τί ταῦτα ποιεῖτε; καὶ ἡμεῖς ὁμοιοπαθεῖς ἐσμεν ὑμῖν ἄνθρωποι εὐαγγελιζόμενοι ὑμᾶς ἀπὸ τούτων τῶν ματαίων ἐπιστρέφειν ἐπὶ θεὸν ζῶντα, ὃς ἐποίησεν τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν καὶ τὴν θάλασσαν καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐν αὐτοῖς· 16 ὃς ἐν ταῖς παρωχημέναις γενεαῖς εἶσεν πάντα τὰ ἔθνη πορεύεσθαι ταῖς ὁδοῖς αὐτῶν· 17 καίτοι οὐκ ἁμάρτυρον αὐτὸν ἀφῆκεν ἀγαθουργῶν, οὐρανόθεν ὑμῖν ὑετοῦς διδοῦς καὶ καιροὺς καρποφόρους, ἐμπιπλῶν τροφῆς καὶ εὐφροσύνης τὰς καρδίας ὑμῶν.

¹³⁶δ^{εισιδαίμων}, *ον*, gen. *ονος* can, like *δεισιδαιμονία*, be used in a denigrating sense 'superstitious' (cp. Maximus Tyr. 14, 6f in critique of the δ. as a κόλαξ 'flatterer' of the gods μακάριος εὐσεβῆς φίλος θεοῦ, *δυστηγῆς δὲ ὁ δεισιδαίμων* [s. H. app. and T.'s rdg.]; Philo, *Cher.* 42; s. Field, *Notes* 125-27), but in the laudatory introduction of Paul's speech before the Areopagus **Ac 17:22** it must mean *devout, religious* (so X., *Cyr.* 3, 3, 58, *Ages.* 11, 8; *Aristot.*, *Pol.* 5, 11 p. 1315a, 1; *Kaibel* 607, 3 πᾶσι φίλος θνητοῖς εἰς τ' ἀθανάτους *δεισιδαίμων*) comp. for *superl.* (as *Diog. L.* 2, 132): *δεισιδαιμονεστέρους ὑμᾶς θεωρῶ* *I perceive that you are very devout people* **Ac 17:22** (the Athenians as the εὐσεβέστατοι τ. Ἑλλήνων: *Jos.*, *C. Ap.* 2, 130. Cp. *Paus. Attic.* 24, 3 Ἀθηναῖοις περισσότερόν τι ἢ τοῖς ἄλλοις ἐς τὰ θεῖά ἐστι σπουδῆς).—DELG s.v. *δαίμων*. TW. Spicq.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 216.]

¹³⁷"The quotation which serves both as proof and explanation comes from Aratus' *Phaenomena* 5. The plural, 'poets' (καθ' ὑμᾶς, 'your,' replaces the possessive pronoun), does not prove that Luke was thinking of several poets,⁶³ referring, say, to Cleanthes' *Hymn to Zeus* in which there is a similar expression,⁶⁴ nor that he was designating the preceding triad as a quotation.⁶⁵ The plural is simply a literary convention.⁶⁶" [Hans Conzelmann, *Acts of the Apostles: A Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. Eldon Jay Epp and Christopher R. Matthews, trans. James Limburg, A. Thomas Kraabel and Donald H. Juel, *Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987), 145.]

¹³⁸χ^{λευάζω} (*χλευή*) impf. *ἐχλεύαζον*; fut. 3 sg. *χλευάσει* (Pr 19:28 Aq Theod.; TestLevi 7:2); aor. 3 sg. *ἐχλεύασε* (Is 37:22 Sym.); aor. pass. impv. 3 pl. *χλευασθήτωσαν* (Pr 4:21 Theod.) (*Aristoph.*, *Demosth.* et al.; late pap; TestLevi; *Jos.*, *Bell.* 6, 365, *C. Ap.* 2, 137; *Just.*, *Tat.*)

wanted to hear more details later on: οἱ δὲ εἶπαν· ἀκουσόμεθά σου περὶ τούτου καὶ πάλιν. Luke indicates at this rejection of his message Paul left the Areopagus: οὕτως ὁ Παῦλος ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ μέσου αὐτῶν. Publicly this seemed humiliating, but it did signal that in the eyes of the council Paul's proposals were so ridiculous that he could not be seriously proposing a new religion without legal standing. No action against him was needed, other than this public ridiculing of him.

But there were some converts that came out of this humiliating experience:

τινὲς δὲ ἄνδρες κολληθέντες αὐτῷ ἐπίστευσαν, ἐν οἷς καὶ Διονύσιος ὁ Ἀρεοπαγίτης καὶ γυνὴ ὀνόματι Δάμαρις καὶ ἕτεροι σὺν αὐτοῖς.

But some of them joined him and became believers, including Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris, and others with them.

How many converts came out of this speech Luke does not indicate precisely. But he names two of them. Dionysius was a member of the council, ὁ Ἀρεοπαγίτης, but nothing more is mentioned. Some centuries later the church historian Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History* (3.4.10) claims that this man became a spiritual leader of the church at Corinth.¹³⁹ Also named is a woman, Δάμαρις, Damaris, about whom we know nothing else. The mentioning of her as being present in Paul's speech has some importance in acknowledging that women were permitted to participate in these discussions and debates at the Areopagus. What Luke does not make clear is whether there were earlier converts prior to this episode during the several weeks of Paul's presence in the city. Verse 34 is intended only to indicate converts coming from this speech at the Areopagus. The likelihood is that others had come to Christ prior to this speech, and thus these new converts became a part of the beginnings of the Christian community there.

In 18:1 Luke in very abbreviated manner indicates that Paul left Athens shortly after this episode for Corinth: Μετὰ ταῦτα χωρισθεὶς ἐκ τῶν Ἀθηνῶν ἦλθεν εἰς Κόρινθον.

Because Paul references his time in Athens in his first letter to the Thessalonians (3:1-10), some attention must be given to it, and how it fits Luke's account:

1 Thess. 3:1-10. 3.1 Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we decided to be left alone in Athens; 2 and we sent Timothy, our brother and co-worker for God in proclaiming the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you for the sake of your faith, 3 so that no one would be shaken by these persecutions. Indeed, you yourselves know that this is what we are destined for. 4 In fact, when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we were to suffer persecution; so it turned out, as you know. 5 For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith; I was afraid that somehow the tempter had tempted you and that our labor had been in vain.

6 But Timothy has just now come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love. He has told us also that you always remember us kindly and long to see us—just as we long to see you. 7 For this reason, brothers and sisters, during all our distress and persecution we have been encouraged about you through your faith. 8 For we now live, if you continue to stand firm in the Lord. 9 How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? 10 Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith.

3.1 Διὸ μηκέτι στέγοντες εὐδοκήσαμεν καταλειφθῆναι ἐν Ἀθήναις μόνοι 2 καὶ ἐπέμψαμεν Τιμόθεον, τὸν ἀδελφὸν ἡμῶν καὶ συνεργὸν τοῦ θεοῦ ἐν τῷ εὐαγγελίῳ τοῦ Χριστοῦ, εἰς τὸ στηρίξει ὑμᾶς καὶ παρακαλέσει ὑπὲρ τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν 3 τὸ μηδένα σαίνεσθαι ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσιν ταύταις. αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἶδατε ὅτι εἰς τοῦτο κείμεθα· 4 καὶ γὰρ ὅτε πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἦμεν, προελέγομεν ὑμῖν ὅτι μέλλομεν θλιβεσθαι, καθὼς καὶ ἐγένετο καὶ οἶδατε. 5 διὰ τοῦτο κάγω μηκέτι στέγων ἐπέμψα εἰς τὸ γνῶναι τὴν πίστιν ὑμῶν, μή πως ἐπέiraσεν ὑμᾶς ὁ πειράζων καὶ εἰς κενὸν γένηται ὁ κόπος ἡμῶν.

6 Ἄρτι δὲ ἐλθόντος Τιμοθέου πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἀφ' ὑμῶν καὶ εὐαγγελισαμένου ἡμῖν τὴν πίστιν καὶ τὴν ἀγάπην ὑμῶν καὶ ὅτι ἔχετε μείαν ἡμῶν ἀγαθὴν πάντοτε, ἐπιποθοῦντες ἡμᾶς ἰδεῖν καθάπερ καὶ ἡμεῖς ὑμᾶς, 7 διὰ τοῦτο παρεκλήθημεν, ἀδελφοί, ἐφ' ὑμῖν ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ ἀνάγκῃ καὶ θλίψει ἡμῶν διὰ τῆς ὑμῶν πίστεως, 8 ὅτι νῦν ζῶμεν ἐὰν ὑμεῖς στήκετε ἐν κυρίῳ. 9 τίνα γὰρ εὐχαριστίαν δυνάμεθα τῷ θεῷ ἀναπαροδοῦναι περὶ ὑμῶν ἐπὶ πάσῃ τῇ χαρᾷ ἣ χαιρομεν δι' ὑμᾶς ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ ἡμῶν, 10 νυκτὸς καὶ ἡμέρας ὑπερεκπερισσοῦ δεόμενοι εἰς τὸ ἰδεῖν ὑμῶν τὸ πρόσωπον καὶ καταρτίσαι τὰ ὑστερήματα τῆς πίστεως ὑμῶν;

The point of concern and challenge in this text is the movements of Timothy. First Thessalonians was written by

1 to engage in mockery, mock, sneer, scoff (Philo, *Sacr. Abel.* 70; *Jos., Ant.* 7, 85; *TestLevi* 14:8) **Ac 2:13** v.l. (for δια-); **17:32** (cp. *Herm. Wr.* 1, 29.—*ASizoo, GereformTT* 24, 1924, 289–97).

2 to make fun of maliciously, mock, scoff at, sneer at, trans. τινὰ someone (so also *Appian, Bell. Civ.* 2, 153 §645; *Lucian, Prom. in Verb.* 33; *LXX; TestLevi* 7:2; *Jos., Ant.* 12, 170; *Tat.* 33, 2f; cp. *Philo, Mos.* 1, 29; *Just., D.* 137, 1 αὐτοῦ τοὺς μῶλωπας; *Tat.* 22, 1 τὰς πανηγύρεις) *1 Cl* 39:1. *W. ὑβρίζειν* (*Plut., Artox.* 1025 [27, 5]) *Dg* 2:7.—*DELG* s.v. χλευή. *New Docs* 2, 104. M-M.

[*William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 1085.]

¹³⁹Also the heretical writings labeled *Pseudo-Dionysius* were falsely attributed to him in later church tradition after the fifth century.

Paul from Athens during the time of Luke's account. What is clearly asserted by Paul is that at the time of the writing of this letter Timothy was with Paul in Athens. He then was sent by Paul to Thessalonica to help the church and then bring a report back to Paul in Athens. At the time of the writing of the letter, Timothy had returned to Athens with good news about the condition of the church at Thessalonica, along with a report about some issues and questions the church had. First Thessalonians was then written by Paul and then Timothy was dispatched again to Thessalonica with the letter. No mention is made of Silas, although he is included in the list of senders of the letter in 1:1, along with Paul and Timothy. This would suggest that he was also in Athens at the time of the writing of the letter.

The challenge here is that on the surface Luke's mentioning of Timothy and Silas (Acts 17:14) and Paul's references seem to be at odds with one another. When treated superficially they are. But several factors must be kept in mind. First, Luke seldom ever gives much attention to the associates accompanying Paul on any of the journeys. His interest is in Paul's work. Second, as we will see later regarding the ministry in Corinth, there are huge gaps even in Paul's movements during the time of his lengthy stay at Ephesus on the third missionary journey. And these included at least one trip to Corinth completely omitted by Luke. Third, a modern chronological accounting of all the characters in a historical narrative will never happen in ancient documents. No interest in such details were present in ancient writings. Thus to insist on this and then play the primary vs. secondary sources against one another as though one is right and the other wrong is not credible scholarship. Fourth, a much better approach is to re-construct a possible scenario where the limited pieces of the puzzle can fit reasonable well as the most likely description of what happened. This is standard historiography in dealing with limited pieces of data. The results are not presented as historical certainty, but as probability.

The possible scenario. When Paul rapidly left Beroea for Athens, Timothy and Silas remained there to help the church. But they had instructions to join Paul in Athens as soon as possible (17:14-15). Sometime in the next few weeks they did just this in coming to Athens, and this was well before the Areopagus speech of Paul. Timothy at least, and possibly Silas as well, were then dispatched to Thessalonica to check on the church there. He / they returned back to Athens. They bring encouraging news to Paul about the situation in Thessalonica, as well as a love offering from both Thessalonica and Philippi for financial support of Paul's ministry in Achaia. Paul mentions this love offering in 2 Cor. 11:9¹⁴⁰ and in Phil. 4:15-16.¹⁴¹ This prompted the writing of First Thessalonians, and Timothy and probably Silas also returned to Thessalonica carrying the letter. By the time they get back to Achaia Paul has left Athens and is in Corinth where they rejoin him according to Acts 18:5. Note that Luke says they arrived from Macedonia (ἀπὸ τῆς Μακεδονίας), not from Beroea. All these took place over a period of several weeks, perhaps months. The logistics of traveling back and forth from Macedonia to Achaia easily allow for several such trips to be made over a period of several weeks.

What are some insights to be gleaned from Paul's experience at Athens? Several important lessons emerge from this episode.

1) Flexibility is the key to ministry. if the assessments are correct, Paul did not originally intend to go to Athens on the second missionary journey. But when issues of danger and safety forced him to head south rather than continue westward along the Via Egnatia, he was open to God leading him in unexpected



¹⁴⁰2 Cor. 11:9. And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for my needs were supplied by the friends who came from Macedonia. So I refrained and will continue to refrain from burdening you in any way.

καὶ παρὼν πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑστερηθεὶς οὐ κατενάρκησα οὐθενός· τὸ γὰρ ὑστέρημά μου προσανεπλήρωσαν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἐλθόντες ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, καὶ ἐν παντὶ ἄβαρῆ ἑμαυτὸν ὑμῖν ἐτήρησα καὶ τηρήσω.

¹⁴¹Phil. 4:15-16. 15 You Philippians indeed know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you alone. 16 For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me help for my needs more than once.

15 οἴδατε δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς, Φιλιππηῖοι, ὅτι ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, ὅτε ἐξῆλθον ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, οὐδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία ἐκοινωνήσεν εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήψεως εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς μόνοι, 16 ὅτι καὶ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ καὶ ἅπαξ καὶ δις εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μοι ἐπέμψατε.

directions. Following God's providential leading is always full of surprises. That is just as true now, as it was for the apostle Paul.

The neat aspect of this is that God's leading in surprising directions always contains open doors for ministry and contribution. Our challenge is to be sensitive to those doors and to walk through them gladly.

2) Use established ministry patterns but allow them to be modified. When Paul arrived in Athens he quickly sensed the tremendous need of the Gospel in the city. But he utilized the pattern of previous ministry settings; he went first to the synagogue to preach Christ to the Jews and to any sympathetic Gentile worshippers. The one modification from past patterns was the daily preaching of the Gospel in the market place of Athens. He had time on his hands with just a weekly appearance at the Jewish synagogue. This daily activity was the thing God chose to use in order to get the Gospel before the entire city in a more formal manner at the Areopagus. Individuals had to be invited by the officials to speak there, and Paul got the invitation through the curiosity of two groups of Greek philosophers. As a consequence some individuals found Christ as Savior and became a part of the believing community in the city.

One never knows in advance just exactly how God is going to use them in ministry. We may have some general contours mapped out via training, sense of divine calling, giftedness etc. But there will always be new directions and paths opened up to us by the Lord with the challenge to faithfully share our faith. God knows full well how He wants our paths to intersect the paths of individuals ready to receive Christ. A willingness to follow His leading makes an eternal difference in the lives of some other individuals.

3) Adapt your message to your audience. Paul's sermon, summarized by Luke in vv. 22-31, is a master piece of communication at the level of one's audience. When Paul spoke from the same platform that the great philosophers of Greece had spoken from centuries before, he had a marvelous opportunity to present the claims of Christ to this pagan audience. But these people had absolutely no understanding of God nor of His Son Jesus Christ. It was a completely different situation from the one in Pisidion Antioch years before when he spoke at the Jewish synagogue there (Acts 13:16-41). A very different approach was necessary if his Greek listeners were to understand his message. So Paul preached not about the God of Abraham, but about God as Creator and Judge of all humanity. He communicated his ideas well and ran into a bump when his listeners could not get beyond the resurrection of Christ. But a few of them did, and became believers.

Now this approach has affinity with what Paul did before a completely non-Jewish audience at Lystra, also on the first missionary journey (Acts 14:15-17). There Paul stressed God as Creator and Sustainer of His creation in generous ways. The theme of repentance is present in all three sermons, underscoring the need to call an audience to turn to God, no matter the setting.

There is much to be learned at this point by Christian servants today. Every message about Christ has some core points, but getting those points over to varying audiences requires sensitivity to where your audience is religiously, culturally etc. Canned presentations of the Gospel will not work!

4) Trust those serving with you to carry out ministry as well. Paul knew full well that Timothy and Silas were vital members of the missionary team. Their work complemented that of Paul's and even expanded it. And Paul had confidence in their ability to minister on their own, not just while he was around. He trusted them fully.

So often pastors feel the necessity to either do ministry at the church completely themselves, or else to so micro-manage the work of staff people that they have difficulty doing ministry creatively and effectively. Delegation of responsibility is very necessary, and then complete trust in others to do their work well and faithfully is necessary also. Reporting and correlation of ministries is necessary so that the different ministers can supplement and complement one another in service.

5) Learn to trust God's leadership even in humiliation. When Paul was jeered off the platform of the Areopagus by members of the audience, he didn't stomp off the platform in embarrassed anger at these people. Sure they tried to make him out to be a fool because of his beliefs. But the apostle knew where the ignorance lay. What he realized was that God allowed him to go through this trying experience so that the Gospel message could penetrate the hearts of a few listeners in a life changing way. It wasn't the first time people publicly booed his preaching, nor would it be the last time either. But Paul's pride in himself was not the point. God never promised to make the apostle popular and famous. To the contrary, in his calling on the Damascus road years before had been the promise of much suffering and opposition to his preaching. So Paul's motivation was not promoting himself, but to present Christ as the answer to human sinfulness. How people responded to that message was their issue, not Paul's. Thus, in coming at public preaching this way, Paul even in humiliation on one of the most

famous speaking platforms of the ancient world was able to watch God melt the hearts of some of the listeners and to bring them to Christ. That was all that mattered!

And it should be all that matters to Christian servants today as well!

Paul's experience at Athens is sometimes described as a low point in his missionary endeavors, but a careful analysis of both Luke's account and his own account paint a far more positive picture. We have much to learn from this episode.

6.1.4.2 Work in Corinth, Acts 18:1-17; 1 Cor 2:1-5; 1:13-17; 2 Thess 3:1-5; 1 Cor 3:5-10; 11:2,23; 15:1; 2 Cor 11:7-9

Acts 18:1-17. 18.1 After this Paula left Athens and went to Corinth. 2 There he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, 3 and, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them, and they worked together—by trade they were tentmakers. 4 Every sabbath he would argue in the synagogue and would try to convince Jews and Greeks.

5 When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with proclaiming the word, c testifying to the Jews that the Messiah was Jesus. 6 When they opposed and reviled him, in protest he shook the dust from his clothes and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” 7 Then he left the synagogue and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God; his house was next door to the synagogue. 8 Crispus, the official of the synagogue, became a believer in the Lord, together with all his household; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul became believers and were baptized. 9 One night the Lord said to Paul in a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; 10 for I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to harm you, for there are many in this city who are my people.” 11 He stayed there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

12 But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal. 13 They said, “This man is persuading people to worship God in ways that are contrary to the law.” 14 Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of crime or serious villainy, I would be justified in accepting the complaint of you Jews; 15 but since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves; I do not wish to be a judge of these matters.” 16 And he dismissed them from the tribunal. 17 Then all of them seized Sosthenes, the official of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of these things.

18.1 Μετά ταῦτα χωρισθεῖς ἐκ τῶν Ἀθηνῶν ἦλθεν εἰς Κόρινθον. 2 καὶ εὐρών τινα Ἰουδαῖον ὀνόματι Ἀκύλαν, Ποντικὸν τῷ γένει προσφάτως ἐληλυθότα ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας καὶ Πρίσκιλλαν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, διὰ τὸ διατεταχέναι Κλαύδιον χωρίζεσθαι πάντας τοὺς Ἰουδαίους ἀπὸ τῆς Ῥώμης, προσήλθεν αὐτοῖς 3 καὶ διὰ τὸ ὁμότεχνον εἶναι ἔμενον παρ' αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἠργάζετο· ἦσαν γὰρ σκηνοποιοὶ τῆ τέχνη. 4 διελέγετο δὲ ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ κατὰ πᾶν σάββατον ἔπειθὲν τε Ἰουδαίους καὶ Ἑλληνας. 5 Ὡς δὲ κατήλθον ἀπὸ τῆς Μακεδονίας ὁ τε Σιλᾶς καὶ ὁ Τιμόθεος, συνείχετο τῷ λόγῳ ὁ Παῦλος διαμαρτυρούμενος τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις εἶναι τὸν χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν. 6 ἀντιπασσομένων δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ βλασφημούντων ἐκτιναξάμενος τὰ ἱμάτια εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς· τὸ αἷμα ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν ὑμῶν· καθαρὸς ἐγὼ ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν εἰς τὰ ἔθνη πορεύσομαι. 7 καὶ μεταβάς ἐκεῖθεν εἰσῆλθεν εἰς οἰκίαν τινὸς ὀνόματι Τιτίου Ἰούστου σεβομένου τὸν θεόν, οὗ ἡ οἰκία ἦν συνομοροῦσα τῇ συναγωγῇ. 8 Κρίσπος δὲ ὁ ἀρχισυνάγωγος ἐπίστευσεν τῷ κυρίῳ σὺν ὄλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ, καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν Κορινθίων ἀκούοντες ἐπίστευσαν καὶ ἐβαπτίζοντο. 9 Εἶπεν δὲ ὁ κύριος ἐν νυκτὶ δι' ὀράματος τῷ Παύλῳ· μὴ φοβοῦ, ἀλλὰ λάλει καὶ μὴ σιωπήσης, 10 διότι ἐγὼ εἰμι μετὰ σοῦ καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐπιθήσεται σοι τοῦ κακῶσαι σε, διότι λαὸς ἐστὶ μοι πολὺς ἐν τῇ πόλει αὐτῇ. 11 Ἐκάθισεν δὲ ἐνιαυτὸν καὶ μῆνας ἕξ διδάσκων ἐν αὐτοῖς τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ.

12 Γαλλίωνος δὲ ἀνθυπάτου ὄντος τῆς Ἀχαΐας κατεπέστησαν ὁμοθυμαδὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ ἤγαγον αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸ βῆμα 13 λέγοντες ὅτι παρὰ τὸν νόμον ἀναπαίθει οὗτος τοὺς ἀνθρώπους σέβεσθαι τὸν θεόν. 14 μέλλοντος δὲ τοῦ Παύλου ἀνοίγειν τὸ στόμα εἶπεν ὁ Γαλλίων πρὸς τοὺς Ἰουδαίους· εἰ μὲν ἦν ἀδίκημά τι ἢ ῥαδιούργημα πονηρὸν, ὧ Ἰουδαῖοι, κατὰ λόγον ἂν ἀνεσχόμην ὑμῶν, 15 εἰ δὲ ζητήματά ἐστιν περὶ λόγου καὶ ὀνομάτων καὶ νόμου τοῦ καθ' ὑμᾶς, ὄψεσθε αὐτοί· κριτὴς ἐγὼ τούτων οὐ βούλομαι εἶναι. 16 καὶ ἀπήλασεν αὐτούς ἀπὸ τοῦ βήματος. 17 ἐπιλαβόμενοι δὲ πάντες Σωσθένην τὸν ἀρχισυνάγωγον ἔτυπτον ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ βήματος· καὶ οὐδὲν τούτων τῷ Γαλλίῳ ἐμελεν.

1 Cor 2:1-5. 2.1 When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3 And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. 4 My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

2.1 Κάγῳ ἐλθὼν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ἦλθον οὐ καθ' ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας καταγγέλλων ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ. 2 οὐ γὰρ ἔκρινά τι εἰδέναι ἐν ὑμῖν εἰ μὴ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τοῦτον ἐσταυρωμένον. 3 κάγῳ ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ καὶ ἐν φόβῳ καὶ ἐν τρόμῳ πολλῷ ἐγενόμην πρὸς ὑμᾶς, 4 καὶ ὁ λόγος μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμά μου οὐκ ἐν πειθοῖ[ς] σοφίας

[λόγοις] ἀλλ' ἐν ἀποδείξει πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως, 5 ἵνα ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν μὴ ᾗ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ' ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ.

1 Cor. 1:13-17. 13 Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. 16 (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.

13 μεμέρισται ὁ Χριστός; μὴ Παῦλος ἐσταυρώθη ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ἢ εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου ἐβαπτίσθητε; 14 εὐχαριστῶ [τῷ θεῷ] ὅτι οὐδένα ὑμῶν ἐβάπτισα εἰ μὴ Κρίσπον καὶ Γάϊον, 15 ἵνα μὴ τις εἴπῃ ὅτι εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα ἐβαπτίσθητε. 16 ἐβάπτισα δὲ καὶ τὸν Στεφανᾶ οἶκον, λοιπὸν οὐκ οἶδα εἴ τινα ἄλλον ἐβάπτισα. 17 οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλὲν με Χριστὸς βαπτίζειν ἀλλὰ εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου, ἵνα μὴ κενωθῆ ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

2 Thess 3:1-5. 3.1 Finally, brothers and sisters, pray for us, so that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified everywhere, just as it is among you, 2 and that we may be rescued from wicked and evil people; for not all have faith. 3 But the Lord is faithful; he will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one. 4 And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will go on doing the things that we command. 5 May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.

3.1 Τὸ λοιπὸν προσεύχεσθε, ἀδελφοί, περὶ ἡμῶν, ἵνα ὁ λόγος τοῦ κυρίου τρέχῃ καὶ δοξάζεται καθὼς καὶ πρὸς ὑμᾶς, 2 καὶ ἵνα ῥυσθῶμεν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀτόπων καὶ πονηρῶν ἀνθρώπων· οὐ γὰρ πάντων ἡ πίστις. 3 Πιστὸς δὲ ἐστὶν ὁ κύριος, ὃς στηρίξει ὑμᾶς καὶ φυλάξει ἀπὸ τοῦ πονηροῦ. 4 πεποιθᾶμεν δὲ ἐν κυρίῳ ἐφ' ὑμᾶς, ὅτι ἃ παραγγέλλομεν [καί] ποιεῖτε καὶ ποιήσετε. 5 Ὁ δὲ κύριος κατευθύνει ὑμῶν τὰς καρδίας εἰς τὴν ἀγάπην τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ εἰς τὴν ὑπομονὴν τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

1 Cor 3:5-10. 5 What then is Apollos? What is Paul? Servants through whom you came to believe, as the Lord assigned to each. 6 I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. 7 So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth. 8 The one who plants and the one who waters have a common purpose, and each will receive wages according to the labor of each. 9 For we are God's servants, working together; you are God's field, God's building.

10 According to the grace of God given to me, like a skilled master builder I laid a foundation, and someone else is building on it. Each builder must choose with care how to build on it.

5 Τί οὖν ἐστὶν Ἀπολλῶς; τί δὲ ἐστὶν Παῦλος; διάκονοι δι' ὧν ἐπιστεύσατε, καὶ ἐκάστῳ ὡς ὁ κύριος ἔδωκεν. 6 ἐγὼ ἐφύτευσα, Ἀπολλῶς ἐπότισεν, ἀλλὰ ὁ θεὸς ἠΐξανεν· 7 ὥστε οὔτε ὁ φυτεύων ἐστὶν τι οὔτε ὁ ποτίζων ἀλλ' ὁ αὐξάνων θεός. 8 ὁ φυτεύων δὲ καὶ ὁ ποτίζων ἓν εἰσιν, ἕκαστος δὲ τὸν ἴδιον μισθὸν λήμψεται κατὰ τὸν ἴδιον κόπον· 9 θεοῦ γὰρ ἐσμεν συνεργοί, θεοῦ γεώργιον, θεοῦ οἰκοδομὴ ἐστε. 10 Κατὰ τὴν χάριν τοῦ θεοῦ τὴν δοθεῖσάν μοι ὡς σοφὸς ἀρχιτέκτων θεμέλιον ἔθηκα, ἄλλος δὲ ἐποικοδομεῖ. ἕκαστος δὲ βλεπέτω πῶς ἐποικοδομεῖ.

1 Cor. 11:2. I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions just as I handed them on to you.

Ἐπαινῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς ὅτι πάντα μου μέμνησθε καί, καθὼς παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, τὰς παραδόσεις κατέχετε.

1 Cor. 11:23. For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you,...

Ἐγὼ γὰρ παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου, ὃ καὶ παρέδωκα ὑμῖν,...

1 Cor. 15:1. Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand,...

Γνωρίζω δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν, ὃ καὶ παρελάβετε, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐστήκατε,...

2 Cor 11:7-11. 7 Did I commit a sin by humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I proclaimed God's good news to you free of charge? 8 I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. 9 And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for my needs were supplied by the friends who came from Macedonia. So I refrained and will continue to refrain from burdening you in any way. 10 As the truth of Christ is in me, this boast of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. 11 And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!

7 Ἡ ἁμαρτίαν ἐποίησα ἑμαυτὸν ταπεινῶν ἵνα ὑμεῖς ὑψωθῆτε, ὅτι δωρεὰν τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγέλιον εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν; 8 ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας ἐσύλησα λαβὼν ὀψώνιον πρὸς τὴν ὑμῶν διακονίαν, 9 καὶ παρῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑστερηθεὶς οὐ κατενάρκησα οὐθενός· τὸ γὰρ ὑστέρημά μου προσανεπλήρωσαν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἐλθόντες ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, καὶ ἐν παντὶ ἀβαρῆ ἑμαυτὸν ὑμῖν ἐτήρησα καὶ τηρήσω. 10 ἔστιν ἀλήθεια Χριστοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ ὅτι ἡ καύχησις αὐτῆς οὐ φραγήσεται

εἰς ἕμὲ ἐν τοῖς κλίμασιν τῆς Ἀχαΐας. 11 διὰ τί; ὅτι οὐκ ἀγαπῶ ὑμᾶς; ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν.

Whereas sparse information is given about some of the places the missionary team stopped at on this trip, the final city is crammed full of data both by Luke and by Paul himself in several of his letters. This is not to suggest that Corinth was the most important city where a church was established. Instead, the church was so filled with problems that it consumed a hugely disproportionate amount of Paul's time and energy in trying to help solve all the problems. From later writings, such as First Clement at the end of the first century, this tendency toward problems continued on long after Paul past from the scene.

The city of Corinth had a varied history. The city Paul experienced¹⁴² had been rebuilt by Julius Caesar in 44 BCE after the Roman conqueror Lucius Mummius burned the city to the ground in 146 BCE with his complete defeat of the Achaean League.¹⁴³ Thus when drawing implications about the surrounding culture in the city, one must be careful to distinguish ancient Corinth from Roman Corinth, for they were very different cities. The Roman Corinth functioned as capital of the senatorial province of Achaia, and was an important commercial city with twin port towns on either side of the six kilometer wide Isthmus of Corinth, the narrow land bridge that connects the Peloponnese to the mainland: Lechaemum and Cenchreae.¹⁴⁴ Huge amounts of commerce docked at one of the ports, unloaded their cargo to be hauled overland to the other port, where it would be reloaded on to the empty ship that had sailed safely through the very dangerous waters around Peloponnese. Once reloaded the ships continued on to the Italian peninsula. Consequently even Roman Corinth enjoyed substantial wealth and affluence. Additionally it was a Roman military retirement center, especially for sailors, in part because of being a center of worship for Poseidon, the god of the sea. The town was filled with temples to various deities originating in Greece, Rome, and Egypt: Aphrodite, Poseidon, Apollo, Hermes, Venus-Fortuna, and Isis. The one most well known today was the temple of Aphrodite located on the high hill (575 meters) just outside the city known as the Acrocorinth. But by Paul's day the temple was largely in ruins, although large numbers of sacred prostitutes continued to ply their trade in brothels located on the Acrocorinth and in the city. These were slave girls who had been donated to the temple authorities by grateful clients.



First we will examine the Acts narrative in 18:1-17, and then supplement it with the pieces of information from Paul's writings. The Acts narrative is virtually complete narrative with no speech material. The contents of a vision Paul experience are summarized in vv. 9-10. Luke indicates in v. 11 that Paul remained in Corinth eighteen months. Several short episodes are incorporated into the narrative highlighting only a select few of the events that took place over his stay in the city. These episodes, i.e., scenes, will form the basis of examining the text: scene 1: Aquila and Priscilla, vv. 1-4; scene 2: Silas and Timothy arrive, vv. 5-11; scene 3: attack on Paul by the Jews before Gallio, vv. 12-17. The mentioning of the names of individuals triggers a scene shift from one to the

¹⁴²Κόρινθος, ου, ἡ (Hom. et al.; ins, Philo, SibOr 3, 487 al.; Just., D. 1, 3; Ath. 17, 2) *Corinth* a city in Greece on the isthmus of the same name. From 27 B.C. capital of the senatorial province of Achaia, and seat of the proconsul. The Christian congregation there was founded by Paul on his so-called second missionary journey, **Ac 18:1, 27 D; 19:1; 1 Cor 1:2; 2 Cor 1:1, 23; 2 Ti 4:20**; 1 Cl ins; MPol 22:2; EpilMosq 5; AcPl Ha 6, 1f; AcPlCor 1:2; 2:1; ἄνδρες K. 2:26. Also subscr. of Ro v.l. and 1 Th.—ECurtius, Peloponnesos II 1852, 514ff; JCladder, Corinth 1923; OBroneer, BA 14, '51, 78–96; Pauly-W. Suppl. IV 991–1036; VI 182ff, 1350f; Kl. Pauly III 301ff; BHHW II 988ff; Corinth, Results of Excavations Conducted by the American School of Classical Studies at Athens 1929ff; RCarpenter, Korinthos 6 '60; FJdeWaele, Corinth and St. Paul '61; DESmith, The Egyptian Cults at Corinth: HTR 70, '77, 201–31; GTheissen, The Social Setting of Pauline Christianity '82 (Eng. tr.); JMurphy-O'Connor, St. Paul's Corinth '83 (reff.), Corinth: ABD I 1134–39 (add. lit.); PECS 240–43.—S. the Corinthian ins (Dssm., LO 12, 8 [LAE 16, 7]): [συνα]γωγῆ Ἐβρ[αίων]=Boffo, Iscrizioni no. 45 and lit. p. 361f. Strabo 8, 6, 20 suggests the problems of immorality associated with a major port city, but his references to cult prostitution, as in his quotation of the proverb οὐ παντὸς ἀνδρὸς ἐς Κόρινθον ἔσθ' ὁ πλοῦς ibid. (=Aristoph. Fgm. 902a; cp. Ael. Aristid. 29, 17 K.=40 p. 755 D.) concern pre-Roman times and have been used without adequate caution for inferences about Paul's Corinth.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 560.]

¹⁴³“In 146BC, Rome declared war on the Achaean League, and after victories over league forces in the summer of that year, the Romans under Lucius Mummius besieged Corinth, in an action known as the battle; when he entered the city Mummius put all the men to the sword and sold the women and children into slavery before he torched the city, for which he was given the cognomen *Achaicus* as the conqueror of the Achaean League.⁴² While there is archeological evidence of some minimal habitation in the years afterwards, Julius Caesar refounded the city as *Colonia laus Iulia Corinthiensis* in 44 BC shortly before his assassination.” [“Ancient Corinth,” Wikipedia.org]

¹⁴⁴Although various efforts to dig a canal across the isthmus were attempted beginning in the seventh century BCE, a canal was not successfully completed until 1893 after eleven years of work.

next section.

Scene 1: meeting Aquila and Priscilla, vv. 1-4.

18.1 Μετὰ ταῦτα χωρισθεὶς ἐκ τῶν Ἀθηνῶν ἦλθεν εἰς Κόρινθον. 2 καὶ εὐρῶν τινα Ἰουδαῖον ὀνόματι Ἀκύλαν, Ποντικὸν τῷ γένει προσφάτως ἐλληλυθότα ἀπὸ τῆς Ἰταλίας καὶ Πρίσκιλλαν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, διὰ τὸ διατεταχέναι Κλαύδιον χωρίζεσθαι πάντας τοὺς Ἰουδαίους ἀπὸ τῆς Ἑρώμης, προσῆλθεν αὐτοῖς 3 καὶ διὰ τὸ ὁμότεχνον εἶναι ἔμμενεν παρ' αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἠργάζετο· ἦσαν γὰρ σκηνοποιοὶ τῆ τέχνη. 4 διελέγετο δὲ ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ κατὰ πᾶν σάββατον ἔπειθὲν τε Ἰουδαίους καὶ Ἑλληνας.

18.1 After this Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. 2 There he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, 3 and, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them, and they worked together—by trade they were tentmakers. 4 Every sabbath he would argue in the synagogue and would try to convince Jews and Greeks.

Paul made the trip from Athens to Corinth without his associates, who were still in Macedonia delivering First Thessalonians to the church in Thessalonica. The time frame was sometime during AD 50, or perhaps slightly earlier.¹⁴⁵ Coming into contact with this Jewish Christian couple, Priscilla and Aquila, would prove to be a significant event in Paul's life, for they would share together in ministry off and on the rest of Paul's life: Acts 18:18, 26; also Rom. 16:3; 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Tim. 4:19.¹⁴⁶ This couple provided the apostle the needed fellowship, missing because of the absence of Silas and Timothy in those early days at Corinth.

Some way Paul learned of their presence in the city and he προσῆλθεν αὐτοῖς, *went to see them*. Beyond their shared religious commitment as Christians, they shared the same trade: διὰ τὸ ὁμότεχνον εἶναι.¹⁴⁷ As a result an invitation came to Paul to stay with them and to join them in their work as 'tentmakers': ἔμμενεν παρ' αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἠργάζετο· ἦσαν γὰρ σκηνοποιοὶ τῆ τέχνη. The work as a 'tentmakers' -- σκηνοποιοὶ -- in a large city like Corinth has raised questions about exactly what was the work they did.¹⁴⁸ The etymology of σκηνοποιοὶς sug-

¹⁴⁵Two very important time indicators surface in this passage. First is Luke's statement that Priscilla and Aquila had been forced to leave Rome because of a decree of emperor Claudius. From the Roman historian Suetonius we learn in *Claudii vita* 25: "Iudaeos impulsore Chresto assidue tumultuantis Roma expulit" (He expelled Jews from Rome, who were constantly making disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus). The reference to Chresto is most likely a misunderstood reference to Christ implying Christian activity inside the Jewish community at Rome. This can be clearly dated from Roman records as taking place in 49 AD. This Christian couple was already in Corinth when Paul arrived there.

Second, toward the end of Paul's stay in Corinth Jewish charges against him were brought before the Roman proconsul Gallio. Roman records establish that he was proconsul in the city during 51-52, with one year terms beginning on May 1 annually. Luke indicates that Paul remained in the city ἔτι προσμείνας ἡμέρας ἰκανὰς, for a considerable time, after the episode with Gallio in vv. 12-17. It is unclear at what point during his proconsulship this incident happened with Paul, but it did take place most likely sometime between May 1 of 51 and April 30 of 52. Whether Paul left the city before Gallio did is not clear.

The reason for the importance of these two dates is that they provide us with a pair of the very few bridges for dating between the chronology of events in the biblical text and a Roman calendar system with enough connection to the modern calendar system so that relatively specific dates can be established.

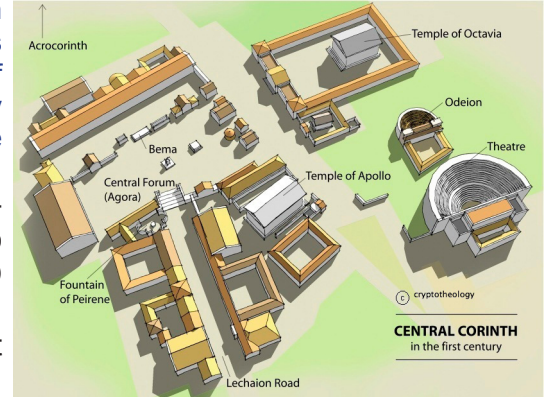
¹⁴⁶C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 861.

¹⁴⁷**ὁμότεχνος, ον** (ὁμός 'one and the same', τέχνη; since Hdt. 2, 89; Appian, Bell. Civ. 4, 27 §119; Lucian; Alciphron 3, 25, 4; Philostrat., Vi. Soph. 1, 9 p. 11, 27; Ps.-Phocyl. 88; Jos., Ant. 8, 334; IKosPH 324; PFouad 37, 7 [48 A.D.]) *practicing the same trade* **Ac 18:3**.—DELG s.v. ὁμό. M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 709.]

¹⁴⁸**σκηνοποιός, οῦ, ὁ**

1. maker of stage properties (acc. to Pollux 7, 189 the Old Comedy used the word as a synonym for μηχανοποιός=either a 'stagehand' who moved stage properties [as Aristoph., Pax 174] or a 'manufacturer of stage properties'. Associated terms include σκηνογράφος Diog. L. 2, 125 and σκηνογραφία Arist., Poet. 1449a and Polyb. 12, 28a, 1, in ref. to painting of stage scenery) **Ac 18:3**. But if one understands σκηνή not as 'scene' but as 'tent' and considers it improbable that Prisca, Aquila, and Paul would have practiced such a trade in the face of alleged religious objections (s. Schürer II 54–55 on Jewish attitudes towards theatrical productions), one would follow the traditional rendering



gests tent (σκηνο-) maker (-ποιός), but in the use of this term outside the New Testament it mostly refers to setting up a tent, not making a tent in the sense of manufacturing one. A growing consensus of scholarship leans toward understanding this term in connection to working with leather. But this understanding carries with it the religious baggage that a leather worker such as Simon who was a tanner at Joppa (Σίμωνι βυρσεῖ) in Acts 10:6 had to live on the fringe of Jewish religious life because of constantly coming in contact with dead animals. It is doubtful that Saul the Pharisee would have moved this direction career wise in his quest to become a Pharisee. With serious doubt, this trade skill was developed by Paul during his pre-Christian days as a part of the necessary trade skill for earning a living as a Pharisee. Consequently it cannot be established with certainty just what Paul did in order to earn a living while traveling in ministry. Whatever it was, he shared it in common with Priscilla and Aquila. Thus both their common trade skills and shared faith in Christ helped built a deep and lasting friendship with one another.

Beyond this common bond with the Jewish Christian couple, Luke stresses Paul weekly activity in the Jewish synagogue of Corinth: διελέγετο δὲ ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ κατὰ πᾶν σάββατον ἔπειθὲν τε Ἰουδαίους καὶ Ἕλληνας, *Every sabbath he would argue in the synagogue and would try to convince Jews and Greeks.* Again (cf. 17:2, 17; also 18:19, 19:8, 20:7, 9, 24:12, 25), Luke uses the verb διελέγετο to describe Paul's verbal communication of the Gospel at the synagogue. That is, he presented the Gospel and discussed it back and forth with them. Objections could have been raised but Paul would have addressed them in a Christ honoring manner. All of this to say that the English verb 'argue' is not the most accurate way to translate διελέγετο. The YABC translation "lead discussions" is much more accurate.

The second statement ἔπειθὲν τε Ἰουδαίους καὶ Ἕλληνας, and he sought to persuade Jews and Greeks. The

2. tentmaker. This interpretation has long enjoyed favor (s. Lampe s.v.; REB, NRSV; Hemer, Acts 119, 233), but several considerations militate against it. The term σκηνοποιός is not used outside the Bible (and its influence), except for Pollux (above) and Herm. Wr. 516, 10f=Stob. I, 463, 7ff. There it appears as an adj. and in a figurative sense concerning production of a dwelling appropriate for the soul. The context therefore clearly indicates a structure as the primary component, but in the absence of such a qualifier in **Ac 18:3** it is necessary to take account of words and expressions that similarly contain the terms σκηνή and ποιεῖν. A survey of usage indicates that σκηνή appears freq. as the obj. of ποιέω in the sense 'pitch' or 'erect a tent' (s. ποιέω 1a; act. σκηνοποιέω Is 13:20 Sym. οὐδὲ σκηνοποιήσει ἐκεῖ ~ Ἀραψ; 22:15 Sym.; mid. σκηνοποιέομαι Aristot., Meteor. 348b, 35; Clearch., Fgm. 48 W.; Polyb. 14, 1, 7; Diod S 3, 27, 4; Ps.-Callisth. 2, 9, 8.—Cp. σκηνοποιῖα Aeneas Tact. 8, 3; Polyb. 6, 28, 3; ins, RevArch 3, '34, 40; and acc. to the text. trad. of Dt 31:10 as an alternate expr. for σκηνοπηγία.—Ex 26:1, it is granted, offers clear evidence of use of the non-compounded σκηνή + ποιέω in the sense 'produce' or 'manufacture [not pitch] a tent', but the context makes the meaning unmistakable; cp. Herodian 7, 2, 4 on the building of rude housing). Analogously σκηνοποιός would mean 'one who pitches or erects tents', linguistically a more probable option than that of 'tentmaker', but in the passages cited for σκηνοποιέω and σκηνοποιῖα components in the context (cp. the case for provision of housing in the Hermetic pass.) clearly point to the denotation 'pitching of tents', whereas **Ac 18:3** lacks such a clear qualifier. Moreover, it is questionable whether residents of nomadic areas would depend on specialists to assist in such a common task (s. **Mt 17:4** par. where a related kind of independent enterprise is mentioned).—That Prisca, Aquila, and Paul might have been engaged in the preparation of parts for the production of a tent is also improbable, since such tasks would have been left to their hired help. That they might have been responsible for putting a tent together out of various pieces is ruled out by the availability of the term σκηνογράφος (Ael., VH 2, 1 et al.; Bull. Inst. Arch. Bulg. 8, 69) in the sense of stitching together (the verb ἐπιτελεῖν **Hb 8:5** does not support such a view, for it is not an alternate expr. for 'production' of a tent but denotes 'completion' of a project, connoting a strong sense of religious commitment; see ἐπιτελέω 2) in which the component ράφ- provides an unmistakable qualifier.—In modern times more consideration has been given to identification of Paul's trade as 'leather-worker', an interpretation favored by numerous versions and patristic writings (s. Zahn, AG, ad loc.; L-S-J-M Suppl., s.v., as replacement for their earlier 'tentmaker'; Haenchen, ad loc., after JJeremias, ZNW 30, '31; Hock, s. below). As such he would make tents and other products from leather (Hock [s. below] 21). But this and other efforts at more precise definition, such as weaver of tent-cloth (a view no longer in fashion) may transmit reflections of awareness of local practice in lieu of semantic precision.—In the absence of any use of the term σκηνοποιός, beyond the pass. in Pollux and the Herm. Wr., and the lack of specific qualifiers in the text of **Ac 18:3**, one is left with the strong probability that Luke's publics in urban areas, where theatrical productions were in abundance, would think of σκηνοποιός in ref. to matters theatrical (s. 1). In addition, **Ac 20:34; 1 Cor 4:12; 1 Th 2:9; 2 Th 3:8** indicate that Paul's work was of a technical nature and was carried out in metropolitan areas, where there would be large demand for such kind of work. What publics in other areas might understand is subject to greater question, for the evidence is primarily anecdotal.—JWeiss, Das Urchristentum 1917, 135; FGrosheide, Παῦλος σκηνοποιός; TSt 35, 1917, 241f; Zahn, AG II 632, 10; 634; Billerb. II 745–47; Beginn. IV, 223; PLampe, BZ 31, '87, 211–21; RHock, The Social Context of Paul's Ministry: Tentmaking and Apostleship '80.—M-M. TW.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 928-29.]



core idea of πείθω is to persuade another to adopt your viewpoint. The use of the imperfect form of the Greek verb ἐπειθέω is most likely the conative function with the resulting meaning of reputedly attempting to persuade. What is most interesting is that at the Jewish synagogue in Corinth Paul is making his appeal to both Jews and Greeks, i.e., none Jews, who are present at the synagogue. The pattern that is emerging on both the first and second missionary journeys is that at each Jewish synagogue Gentile God-fearers are present and very responsive to Paul's preaching. As verse six indicates these Gentiles were more responsive than the Jewish members of the synagogue.

The imperfect tense of both core verbs in verse four clearly suggest that Paul was very active in the synagogue for some time. The Jewish opposition to him took longer to develop in Corinth than it had in most of the other cities both in Macedonia and Galatia. Paul was settling into a routine here of working his trade with Aquila and Priscilla during the week days, and preaching Christ in the synagogues on the Jewish sabbath. This routine was somewhat different than the one just previously in Athens where διελέγετο μὲν οὖν ἐν τῇ συναγωγῇ τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις καὶ τοῖς σεβομένοις καὶ ἐν τῇ ἀγορᾷ κατὰ πᾶσαν ἡμέραν πρὸς τοὺς παρατυγχάνοντας, *So he led discussions in the synagogue with the Jews and the devout persons, and also in the marketplace every day with those who happened to be there* (17:17).

Scene 2: Silas and Timothy arrive at Corinth. vv. 5-11.

5 Ὡς δὲ κατήλθον ἀπὸ τῆς Μακεδονίας ὁ τε Σιλᾶς καὶ ὁ Τιμόθεος, συνέχετο τῷ λόγῳ ὁ Παῦλος διαμαρτυρόμενος τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις εἶναι τὸν χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν. 6 ἀντιπασσομένων δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ βλασφημούντων ἐκτιναξάμενος τὰ ἱμάτια εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτούς· τὸ αἷμα ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν ὑμῶν· καθαρὸς ἐγὼ ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν εἰς τὰ ἔθνη πορεύσομαι. 7 καὶ μεταβάς ἐκεῖθεν εἰσῆλθεν εἰς οἰκίαν τινὸς ὀνόματι Τιτίου Ἰούστου σεβομένου τὸν θεόν, οὗ ἡ οἰκία ἦν συνομοροῦσα τῇ συναγωγῇ. 8 Κρίσπος δὲ ὁ ἀρχισυνάγωγος ἐπίστευσεν τῷ κυρίῳ σὺν ὅλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ, καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν Κορινθίων ἀκούοντες ἐπίστευον καὶ ἐβαπτίζοντο. 9 Εἶπεν δὲ ὁ κύριος ἐν νυκτὶ δι' ὀράματος τῷ Παύλῳ· μὴ φοβοῦ, ἀλλὰ λάλει καὶ μὴ σιωπήσῃς, 10 διότι ἐγὼ εἰμι μετὰ σοῦ καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐπιθήσεται σοὶ τοῦ κακῶσαι σε, διότι λαὸς ἐστὶ μοι πολὺς ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ. 11 Ἐκάθισεν δὲ ἐνιαυτὸν καὶ μῆνας ἕξ διδάσκων ἐν αὐτοῖς τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ.

5 When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was occupied with proclaiming the word, testifying to the Jews that the Messiah was Jesus. 6 When they opposed and reviled him, in protest he shook the dust from his clothes and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles." 7 Then he left the synagogue and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God; his house was next door to the synagogue. 8 Crispus, the official of the synagogue, became a believer in the Lord, together with all his household; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul became believers and were baptized. 9 One night the Lord said to Paul in a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak and do not be silent; 10 for I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to harm you, for there are many in this city who are my people." 11 He stayed there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

The second scene is signaled by the arrival of Silas and Timothy from Macedonia at Corinth. The brief glimpses at these two earlier in Acts locates them first in Beroea (Macedonia) in 17:14 and Paul waiting for them in Athens (17:16). By reading only these references one would possibly assume that Silas and Timothy left Beroea as soon as they could, but that Paul was already in Corinth by the time they arrived in Achaia. It is this kind of reading, which by the way assumes a modern pattern of story telling chronologically, that creates the impossible dilemma of reconciling the explicit data from Paul's letters, in particular First and Second Thessalonians, about the movements of Timothy. From the scenario presented above, the arrival of Silas and Timothy mentioned here is Acts refers to their coming from delivering First Thessalonians to the church at Thessalonica. Just how long Paul had been in Corinth prior to their arrival is not specified by Luke but the way he describes Paul's preaching ministry suggests that it was considerable time after the apostle first arrived in the city himself. Quite interestingly the verb used here **συνείχετο** τῷ λόγῳ ὁ Παῦλος, *Paul was giving his full time to the Word*, signals that he was able to devote complete attention to preaching rather than having to work as a σκηνοποιός. The most likely reason for this comes from a later recollection of Paul in 2 Cor. 11:9 that friends coming from Macedonia had brought a sizeable love offering to Corinth to financially support the missionary work there.¹⁴⁹ Silas and Timothy were those friends bringing not only good news about the progress of the Gospel in Macedonia, Thessalonica in particular, but the love offering from the church there¹⁵⁰ freed up Paul to give more attention to preaching the Gospel in

¹⁴⁹2 Cor. 11:9. And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for my needs were supplied by the friends who came from Macedonia. So I refrained and will continue to refrain from burdening you in any way.

καὶ παρὼν πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑστερηθεὶς οὐ κατενάρκησα οὐθενός· τὸ γὰρ ὑστέρημά μου προσανεπλήρωσαν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἐλθόντες ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, καὶ ἐν παντὶ ἀβαρῆ ἔμαυτὸν ὑμῖν ἐτήρησα καὶ τηρήσω.

¹⁵⁰Very likely the reference to the love offering in 2 Cor. 11:9 also includes the church at Philippi, also in Macedonia, from what Paul wrote to them much later in 4:15-16.

Corinth.

What this love offering enabled was full time commitment τῷ λόγῳ ὁ Παῦλος διαμαρτυρόμενος τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις εἶναι τὸν χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, *to the Word, witnessing to the Jews that the Messiah is Jesus*. The verb διαμαρτύρομαι is used by Luke to describe the witnessing ministry of Peter in 2:40, 8:25, and 10:42. Now it will be used to refer to the same activity by Paul in 18:5; 20:21, 24, 23:11, and 28:23. The stated content of the witnessing is given as that Jesus is ordained by God as the Judge of the living and the dead (10:42), that the Messiah is Jesus (18:5); that repentance toward God and faith in Jesus are required (20:21), the good news of God's grace (20:24), and the kingdom of God (28:23). The focus in Corinth was to convince the Jewish people that Jesus is indeed the Christ, i.e., the Messiah of God.

Perhaps it was this more concentrated ministry that triggered the typical Jewish opposition to Paul: ἀντιπασσομένων δὲ αὐτῶν καὶ βλασφημούντων, *but when they began opposing and slandering (him)*.¹⁵¹ In Athens nothing is said about Jewish opposition to Paul, and by implication from 17:17 his experience in the synagogue there evidently positive. But Jewish leaders from Thessalonica had tried to incite the Gentile population in Berea against Paul, while his response in the synagogue had been positive (10-12). In Thessalonica, the Jewish leadership had stirred up a Gentile crowd against Paul forcing him to flee the city (17:5-9), after having considerable success in the synagogue there. The stated motivation for this opposition to Paul in Thessalonica was jealousy (Ζηλώσαντες) over his growing influence with the Gentile God-fearers attending their synagogue (17:5). Since no synagogue existed in Philippi, the opposition to him there was solely Gentile. On the first missionary journey some three or so years earlier, Jewish opposition to Paul first surfaced at Pisidian Antioch. Luke describes it in terms of *But when the Jews saw the crowds, they were filled with jealousy; and blaspheming, they contradicted what was spoken by Paul*, ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τοὺς ὄχλους ἐπλήσθησαν ζήλου καὶ ἀντέλεγον τοῖς ὑπὸ Παύλου λαλουμένοις βλασφημοῦντες (13:45). Here Luke describes opposition to Paul in terms of βλασφημοῦντες, *slander*, just as here at Corinth, βλασφημούντων. The Jewish leadership in Pisidian Antioch, however, *manipulated the devout women of high standing and the leading men of the city*, παρώτρυναν τὰς σεβομένας γυναῖκας τὰς εὐσχήμονας καὶ τοὺς πρώτους τῆς πόλεως (13:50), to generate opposition to Paul that forced him and Barnabas to leave the city. A similar pattern emerged at Iconium where Luke says that *the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers*, οἱ δὲ ἀπειθήσαντες Ἰουδαῖοι ἐπήγειραν καὶ ἐκάκωσαν τὰς ψυχὰς τῶν ἐθνῶν κατὰ τῶν ἀδελφῶν (14:2). Here an assassination plot to kill Paul and Barnabas was hatched up between Jewish and Gentile leaders in the city, and these two missionaries fled the city in order to avoid it (14:5-6). Although no synagogue existed at Lystra, it was the Jewish synagogue leadership from Antioch and Iconium who stirred up the Gentile crowds there who stoned Paul into unconsciousness (14:19). With no synagogue in Derbe, Paul and Barnabas enjoyed their most productive and peaceful tenure of ministry there of any of the cities on the first missionary journey.

All of this illustrates the varied pattern and yet the commonality of experience of Paul in dealing with Jews in each of the cities where he traveled. Also interesting is that in Pisidian Antioch on the first journey, when Paul and Barnabas were forced to leave the city, they shook the dust off their feet against their opponents, οἱ δὲ **ἐκτιναξάμενοι τὸν κονιορτὸν** τῶν ποδῶν ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἦλθον εἰς Ἰκόνιον, *And having shook the dust off their feet against them, they came to Iconium* (13:51). In somewhat similar fashion in Corinth, Paul shakes the dust off his clothes in protest against his Jewish opponents in the city: **ἐκτιναξάμενος** τὰ ἱμάτια. Early Paul shook the dust off his feet, but in Corinth he simply shakes his outer garment off.¹⁵² Although the differences in the two rituals are slight, the common point of both is a visual action of protest. The symbolism was to signal that God had given them a witness which they rejected. Now they would face Him in His wrath. Their guilt was on their shoulders

Phil. 4:15-16. 15 You Philippians indeed know that in the early days of the gospel, when I left Macedonia, no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you alone. 16 For even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me help for my needs more than once.

15 οἴδατε δὲ καὶ ὑμεῖς, Φιλιππηῖοι, ὅτι ἐν ἀρχῇ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου, ὅτε ἐξῆλθον ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, οὐδεμία μοι ἐκκλησία ἐκοινωνήσεν εἰς λόγον δόσεως καὶ λήψεως εἰ μὴ ὑμεῖς μόνοι, 16 ὅτι καὶ ἐν Θεσσαλονίκῃ καὶ ἅπαξ καὶ δις εἰς τὴν χρεῖαν μοι ἐπέμψατε.

¹⁵¹“MS D begins v 6 thus: ‘But with much discussion and interpretation of the Scriptures, some Jews opposed (him).’ P⁷⁴ omits ‘and insult him’.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 627.]

¹⁵²The use of the verb ἐκτινάσσω without the direct object of τὸν κονιορτὸν τῶν ποδῶν, *the dust from the feet*, as in Mt. 10:14; Mk. 6:11; Lk. 9:5, and Acts 13:51, may simply indicate the shaking out of the clothes in symbolic protest action. Of course, given how seldom clothes were washed and cleaned in the ancient world, shaking them vigorously as the verb specifies would throw off considerable dust and dirt.

since these missionaries had faithfully given witness to them about Christ.¹⁵³ This followed the instructions given to the disciples by Jesus; see Matt. 10:14 and Mk. 6:11.¹⁵⁴ If there were Gentiles standing around when Paul did this at Corinth, they very likely scratched their heads in puzzlement over what on earth he was doing. But any Jews watching this would have clearly understood the negative meaning of this action.¹⁵⁵

The shaking out of his cloak evidently in the presence of these opponents set up his words to them: εἶπεν πρὸς αὐτοῦς· τὸ αἷμα ὑμῶν ἐπὶ τὴν κεφαλὴν ὑμῶν· καθαρὸς ἐγὼ ἀπὸ τοῦ νῦν εἰς τὰ ἔθνη πορεύσομαι, said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.” Responsibility for the Gospel message now rested solely upon the heads of these Jewish opponents. Blood here symbolizes guilt and responsibility to God.¹⁵⁶ Paul had done God’s bidding in offering the Gospel to these Jewish individuals, and they had rejected the offer. He boldly declares that from this point forward he will concentrate on the non-Jews of Corinth and offer the Gospel to them.

Next a very interesting thing happens. Paul simply goes next door to the synagogue and continues preaching the Gospel to those who will listen: καὶ μεταβὰς ἐκεῖθεν εἰσηλθὲν εἰς οἰκίαν τινὸς ὀνόματι Τιτίου Ἰουστοῦ σεβομένου τὸν θεόν, οὗ ἡ οἰκία ἦν συνομοροῦσα τῇ συναγωγῇ (v. 7). This was the home of Titius Justus, who was a Gentile God-fearer who had converted to Christianity during Paul’s preaching in the synagogue. This is

¹⁵³Compare **Neh. 5:13**. 12 Then they said, “We will restore everything and demand nothing more from them. We will do as you say.” And I called the priests, and made them take an oath to do as they had promised. 13 **I also shook out the fold of my garment and said, “So may God shake out everyone from house and from property who does not perform this promise. Thus may they be shaken out and emptied.”** And all the assembly said, “Amen,” and praised the Lord. And the people did as they had promised.

¹⁵⁴**Matt. 10:14**. 12 As you enter the house, greet it. 13 If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. 14 **If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town.** 15 Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

12 εἰσερχόμενοι δὲ εἰς τὴν οἰκίαν ἀπάσασθε αὐτήν· 13 καὶ ἐὰν μὲν ἦ ἡ οἰκία ἀξία, ἐλθάτω ἡ εἰρήνη ὑμῶν ἐπ’ αὐτήν, ἐὰν δὲ μὴ ἦ ἀξία, ἡ εἰρήνη ὑμῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς ἐπιστραφήτω. 14 **καὶ ὅς ἂν μὴ δέξηται ὑμᾶς μηδὲ ἀκούσῃ τοὺς λόγους ὑμῶν, ἐξερχόμενοι ἔξω τῆς οἰκίας ἢ τῆς πόλεως ἐκείνης ἐκτινάξατε τὸν κονιορτὸν τῶν ποδῶν ὑμῶν.** 15 ἀμὴν λέγω ὑμῖν, ἀνεκτότερον ἔσται γῆ Σοδόμων καὶ Γομόρρων ἐν ἡμέρᾳ κρίσεως ἢ τῆ πόλει ἐκείνῃ.

Mk. 6:11. 10 He said to them, “Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. 11 **If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them.**”

10 καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· ὅπου ἐὰν εἰσέλθητε εἰς οἰκίαν, ἐκεῖ μένετε ἕως ἂν ἐξέλθητε ἐκεῖθεν. 11 **καὶ ὅς ἂν τόπος μὴ δέξηται ὑμᾶς μηδὲ ἀκούσωσιν ὑμῶν, ἐκπορευόμενοι ἐκεῖθεν ἐκτινάξατε τὸν χοῦν τὸν ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν ὑμῶν εἰς μαρτύριον αὐτοῖς.**

¹⁵⁵ἐκτινάσσω G1759 (ektinassō), shake out, shake off; ἀποτινάσσω G701 (apotinassō), shake off.

“CL *ektinassō*, shake out, as in cleaning clothes; search thoroughly, make a disturbance, kick out (of animals). The derived noun *ektinaktron* means a winnowing-shovel. *apotinassō*, shake off (Eur.)

“OT *ektinassō* occurs 21 times in the LXX, usually to render *nā’ar*, though six other Heb. words are once or twice each translated by the same verb. The Lord shook off (*nā’ar*) the Egyptians in the midst of the sea, i.e., out of their chariots as they turned to flee (Exod. 14:27; Ps. 135:15). Nehemiah sealed an → oath taken by the priests by shaking out (*nā’ar*) his lap, symbolizing that anyone breaking the promise would be cursed by a life of homeless wandering, emptied of all his possessions, an outcast (Ps. 126:4 LXX). Metaph. *nā’ar* is used to express weakness: shaken off as easily as a locust (Ps. 109:23). Captive Jerusalem is bidden to stand up and shake herself free from the dust of despair in captivity and from the Gentiles (Isa. 52:2). In 1 Sam. 10:2 *apotinassō* once translates *nātaš* (leave, forsake), when Saul’s father is said to have ceased to be concerned (*apotinaktai*) about the lost asses. In Lam. 2:7 *apotinassō* is used for the piel of *nā’ar*, abhor, reject: the Lord has disowned, cast off, his sanctuary.

“NT In commissioning the Twelve, Jesus tells them that where their message is not accepted, they are to shake off (*ektinassō*, Matt. 10:14; Mk. 6:11; *apotinassō*, Lk. 9:5) the dust from their feet, a gesture of total abandonment. No trace of association with the house or city is to remain. Mark and Luke add, ‘for a testimony against them’, i.e., branding the inhabitants as no better than the heathen outside the covenant. Jewish travellers shook off the dust of Gentile territory from their sandals and clothes before re-entering the Holy Land (SB I 571). Once the apostles have discharged their responsibilities to preach, those rejecting the gospel will suffer judgment, heavier even than that inflicted upon Sodom and Gomorrah. The fate of those cities is often an OT type of fearful retribution for aggravated sin (Deut. 29:23; Isa. 13:19; Jer. 49:18; 50:40; Amos 4:11; Zeph. 2:9). Paul follows Jesus’ advice and makes use of the same dramatic symbolism when the Jews stir up opposition to his preaching in Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:51) and when he makes his final break from the synagogue in Corinth (Acts 18:6).

“The verb *apotinassō* is used in its literal sense to describe Paul’s action in shaking off the snake from his hand after the shipwreck on Malta (Acts 28:5).”

[N. Hillyer, “Εκτινάσσω” In vol. 3, *New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, ed. Lothar Coenen, Erich Beyreuther and Hans Bietenhard (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1986), 560-61.]

¹⁵⁶“Paul’s words about blood and responsibility echo those of various OT passages: Josh 2:19; Judg 9:24; 2 Sam 1:16; 1 Kgs 2:32; Ezek 33:4. In echoing them, Paul divests himself of any responsibility for the refusal of fellow Jews to accept the testimony about Jesus the Messiah. Cf. Matt 27:25; Acts 5:28.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 627.]

all we know about this Gentile convert, since he is never mentioned again in the New Testament. But this was a rather bold move on his part to open up his home for Paul to use as a gathering point for preaching the Gospel.

The move paid big dividends since one of the converts was none other than a leader of the Jewish synagogue, named Crispus: Κρίσπος δὲ ὁ ἀρχισυνάγωγος¹⁵⁷ ἐπίστευσεν τῷ κυρίῳ σὺν ὄλῳ τῷ οἴκῳ αὐτοῦ, καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν Κορινθίων ἀκούοντες ἐπίστευον καὶ ἐβαπτίζοντο. If Crispus as a synagogue leader had initially opposed Paul (cf. vv. 5-6), then Paul was able to win him over after leaving the synagogue and setting up at Titius Justus' home. Whatever the precise situation Luke pointedly indicates that both he and his entire household convert to Christianity. But he is not the only one in the city to come to Christ. Luke indicates that many Corinthians were responding in faith commitment and believer's baptism in the city: καὶ πολλοὶ τῶν Κορινθίων ἀκούοντες ἐπίστευον καὶ ἐβαπτίζοντο. The imperfect tense verbs, ἐπίστευον and ἐβαπτίζοντο, stress ongoing activity over a period of time, probably weeks and maybe months.

Toward the end of Paul's time in the city (note it lasted 18 months, cf. v. 11), the Lord appeared to Paul in a dream to give him assurance of divine protecting in his vigorous preaching of the Gospel. The heavenly command to Paul was simple: μὴ φοβοῦ, ἀλλὰ λάλει καὶ μὴ σιωπήσης, *don't be afraid, but be speaking and not be silent*. Evidently signals of growing opposition to the ministry of Paul in the city were surfacing, and causing some apprehension to the apostle. The basis of the encouragement to Paul in his dream was twofold: 1) διότι ἐγὼ εἰμι μετὰ σοῦ καὶ οὐδεὶς ἐπιθήσεται σοὶ τοῦ κακῶσαί σε, *for I am with you, and no one will lay a hand on you to harm you*. God assured Paul that he would be protected from harm while in the city. Thus he should continue boldly speaking the Gospel. 2) διότι λαὸς ἐστὶ μοι πολὺς ἐν τῇ πόλει ταύτῃ, *for there are many in this city who are my people*. This second reason for the admonition signals that God will use the emerging Christian community to shield the apostle from harm. Luke then states: Ἐκάθισεν¹⁵⁸ δὲ ἑνιαυτὸν καὶ μῆνας ἕξ διδάσκων ἐν αὐτοῖς τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ, *He stayed there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them*. Probably this was from the beginning of AD 51 to the summer of AD 52. Although not entirely clear, this eighteen month period is intending to specify the duration of Paul's stay in the city that was climaxed by the dramatic episode before the proconsul Gallio. How much time elapsed after the vision of assurance (vv. 9-10) and the episode with Gallio (vv. 12-17) is not clear.

Scene 3: Charges against Paul brought before Gallio, vv. 12-17.

12 Γαλλίωνος δὲ ἀνθυπάτου ὄντος τῆς Ἀχαΐας κατεπέστησαν ὁμοθυμαδὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ ἤγαγον αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸ βῆμα 13 λέγοντες ὅτι παρὰ τὸν νόμον ἀναπείθει οὗτος τοὺς ἀνθρώπους σέβεσθαι τὸν θεόν. 14 μέλλοντος δὲ τοῦ Παύλου ἀνοίγειν τὸ στόμα εἶπεν ὁ Γαλλίων πρὸς τοὺς Ἰουδαίους· εἰ μὲν ἦν ἀδικημά τι ἢ ῥαδιούργημα πονηρόν, ὧ Ἰουδαῖοι, κατὰ λόγον ἂν ἀνεσχόμην ὑμῶν, 15 εἰ δὲ ζητήματά ἐστιν περὶ λόγου καὶ ὀνομάτων καὶ νόμου τοῦ καθ' ὑμᾶς, ὄψεσθε αὐτοί· κριτῆς ἐγὼ τούτων οὐ βούλομαι εἶναι. 16 καὶ ἀπήλασεν αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ βήματος. 17 ἐπιλαβόμενοι δὲ πάντες Σωσθένην τὸν ἀρχισυνάγωγον ἔτυπτον ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ βήματος· καὶ οὐδὲν τούτων τῷ Γαλλίῳι ἔμελεν.

12 But when Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal. 13 They said, "This man is persuading people to worship God in ways that are contrary to the law." 14 Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, "If it were a matter of crime or serious villainy, I would be justified in accepting the complaint of you Jews; 15 but since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves; I do not wish to be a judge of these matters." 16 And he dismissed them from the tribunal. 17 Then all of them seized Sosthenes, the official of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of these things.

The inevitable had to happen to Paul. Jewish opposition to him would seek to force him out of the city. Such had succeeded in Pisidion Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, Thessalonica, and Beroea already. Would it succeed this time? Actually no! For now these Jews were dealing with Gallio, who was the Roman proconsul in charge of the province of Achaia, unlike in the previous cities where only city magistrates, στρατηγός, were in charge. The last time Paul had encountered a Roman proconsul was Σεργίῳ Παύλῳ, Sergius Paulus, in Salamis on Cyprus some years earlier (Acts 13:5-12). And that experience had been rather pleasant. A *proconsul*, ἀνθύπατος, was

¹⁵⁷“The *archisynagōgoi* are leaders responsible for the organization of the synagogue service; they normally designate someone to lead the congregation in prayer.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 509-10.]

¹⁵⁸ἐκάθισεν δέ (D h (sy^p sy^h**) have καὶ ἐκάθισεν ἐν Κορίνθῳ): elsewhere in Luke-Acts (except at Lk. 24:49) the verb when used intransitively means to sit. The meaning to reside is uncommon in Greek (see BA 791). Elsewhere this meaning could be due to the ambiguity of the Hebrew ישב, but it is hard to see how Hebrew could have affected the present passage. The aorist ἐκάθισεν is constative, Paul's residence being regarded as a unit (M. 3:72; Zerwick § 253; BDR § 332:1, n. 2). Cf. 28:30.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 870.]

the governor of a Roman senatorial province,¹⁵⁹ not a military governor of an imperial province like those in Palestine. These were known either as *procurators* who came from the equestrian rank of Roman society, and administered the so-called lesser provinces in the empire. Or, they were the *legatus Augusti pro praetore* who answered directly to the emperor. But the proconsuls answered to the Roman senate and typically were a higher caliber person, often a senator himself, than was true of the procurators. There was a huge difference in character and skill between the proconsuls of Sergius Paulus and Gallio, and the procurators in Palestine such as Pilate, Festus, and Felix.

This proconsul was Gallio, Γαλλίωνος.¹⁶⁰ As pro-

¹⁵⁹“ἀνθύπατος, ου, ὁ (ἀντί, ὑπατος; orig. ‘highest’ then ‘consul’; Polyb. et al.; freq. in lit.; Jos., Ant. 14, 236; 244 al.; Mel.; ins [s. e.g. PHermann, Inschriften von Sardeis: Chiron 23, ’93, 233–48: of an honorand, 211 A.D., pp. 238f]; pap [incl. Ox 850 verso 15: AcJ]) **head of the govt. in a senatorial province, proconsul** (s. Hahn 39f; 115; 259, w. lit.). Those mentioned are the proconsul of Cyprus, Sergius Paulus **Ac 13:7**, cp. vss. **8** and **12**; of Achaia, Gallio **18:12**; cp. **19:38**; of Asia MPol 3:1; 4; 9:2, 3; 10:2; 11:1; 12:1.—DELG s.v. ὑπατος. M-M.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 82.]

¹⁶⁰“In v 12 Luke recounts another important episode in the life of Paul: the haling of Paul before the proconsul Gallio. This episode in Acts is accorded historical credence by almost all interpreters of Acts today. A dissenting voice was once raised against its historicity by J. Juster (Les Juifs, 2. 154 n. 4), but he has had little or no following. Strangely enough, the appearance before Gallio is never mentioned by Paul himself in any of his letters, but this Lucan detail has become the most important item in the study of Pauline chronology and missionary activity. In fact, it supplies a rare peg on which to hang their absolute chronology.

“Lucius Junius Gallio is mentioned as a friend of the emperor Claudius and as the proconsul of Achaia in a Greek inscription that records the text of a letter sent by Claudius to the people of Delphi about a depopulation problem. Since the text is dated in the customary Roman fashion, one can determine from it the time when Gallio was proconsul in Achaia. The inscription had been set up in a temple of Apollo in Delphi, where it was discovered by E. Bourguet in fragmentary form in 1905 and 1910. The nine fragments, however, were not fully published until 1970: A. Plassart, “Lettre de l’empereur Claude au gouverneur d’Achaie (en 52),” *Les inscriptions du temple*, 26–33 §286. See also his article, “L’Inscription de Delphes”; cf. J. H. Oliver, “The Epistle of Claudius.”

“The main part of the inscription runs as follows:

- 1 Tiber[ios Klaudios Kais]ar S[ebast]os G[ermanikos, dēmarchikēs exou]
- 2 sias [to IB, autokratōr t]o KZ, p[atēr p]atri[dos ... chairein].
- 3 Pal[ai men t]ēi p[olei tē] tōn Delph[ōn ēn o]u mo[non eunous all’ epimelēs ty]
- 4 chēs aei d’ etērē[sa t]jēn thrēskei[an t]jou Apo[llōnos tou Pythiou. epei de]
- 5 nyn legetai kai [pol]eitōn erē[mo]s einai, hō[s moi arti apēngeile L. Iou]
- 6 nios Galliōn ph[ilos] mou ka[i anthy]patos, [boulomenos tous Delphous]
- 7 eti hexein ton pr[oteron kosmon entel]ē e[tellomai hymein kai ex al]
- 8 lōn poleōn kal[ein eu gegonotas eis Delphous hōs neous katoikous kai]
- 9 autois epitre[pein ekgonois te ta] pres[beia panta echein ta tōn Del]
- 10 phōn hōs pole[itais ep’ isē kai homoia. e]i men gar ti[nes ... hōs polei]
- 11 tai metōkis[anto eis toutous tou]s topous, kr[...]

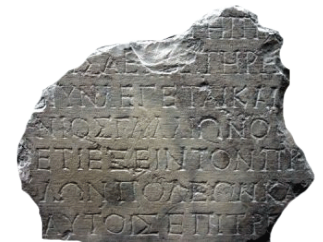
“1 Tiber[ius Claudius Caes]ar A[ugustus] G[ermanicus, invested with tribunician po]wer 2 [for the 12th time, acclaimed imperator for t]he 26th time, F[ather of the Fa]ther[land ... sends greetings to ...]. 3 For a l[ong time I have been not onl]y [well disposed toward t]he ci[ty] of Delph[i, but also solicitous for its 4 pros]perity, and I have always sup[ported th]e cul[t of Pythian] Apol[lo. But] 5 now [since] it is said to be desti[tu]te of [citi]zens, as [L. Jun]i[us Gallio, my fri]end] an[d procon]sul, [recently reported to me, and being desirous that Delphi] 7 should continue to retain [inta]ct its for[mer rank, I] ord[er you (pl.) to in]vite [well-born people also from 8 ot]her cities [to Delphi as new inhabitants and to] 9 all[ow] them [and their children to have all the] privi[leges of Del]phi 10 as being citi[zens on equal and like (basis)]. For i[f] so[me ...] 11 were to trans[fer as citi]zens [to those regions ...].*

“From the text of the letter one sees that Gallio was proconsul of Achaia during the twelfth regnal year of Claudius (A.D. 41–54) and after the twenty-sixth acclamation of him as imperator. The emperor was invested with potestas tribunicia each year, and that investment marked his regnal years. The emperor’s name and the twelfth year of this tribunician power have in large part been reconstructed in this inscription, but the reconstruction is certain, being based on other known inscriptions of Claudius (see M. P. Charlesworth, *Documents Illustrating the Reigns of Claudius & Nero* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951], 11–14). His twelfth regnal year began on 25 January A.D. 52. Acclamation as *imperator* was sporadic, because it depended on military victories in which the emperor was engaged or at least indirectly involved. To date an event by such acclamations, one has to learn when a given acclamation occurred. From other inscriptions it is known that the twenty-second to the twenty-fifth acclamations took place in Claudius’s eleventh regnal

The ruins of the bema in Corinth that Gallio used



The Delphi Inscription



consul, ἀνθυπάτου, he was the senatorial governor over the province of Achaia, τῆς Ἀχαΐας.¹⁶¹ He was stationed in Corinth because it served as the provincial capital.

During his one year term as proconsul he was in Corinth to administer the government for Rome.¹⁶² This was either May 51 to May 52 or a year later. During that period of time, Luke says, κατεπέστησαν ὁμοθυμαδὸν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ ἤγαγον αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸ βῆμα, [the Jews made a united attack on Paul and brought him before the tribunal](#). The *bēma* was the raised platform in the marketplace from which a magistrate spoke to the people.¹⁶³ In order to bring a person before a magistrate, a formal charge had to be presented. These Jews did not think though their charge, like other Jewish opponents of Paul had earlier.¹⁶⁴ Perhaps they were just dummer and not

year (25 January 51 to 24 January 52) and that the twenty-seventh acclamation occurred in his twelfth regnal year before 1 August 52. Theoretically, then, the twenty-sixth acclamation could have occurred during the winter of 51 or in the spring or early summer of 52. The matter is settled by a Greek inscription often neglected in the discussion of Pauline chronology and the Delphi inscription: an inscription of Kys in Caria (published 1887). It combines the twenty-sixth acclamation with the twelfth regnal year: *dēmarchikēs exousias to dōdekaton, hypaton to penpton, autokratora to eikoston kai hekton*, ‘(invested with) tribunician power for the twelfth time, consul for the fifth, emperor for the twenty-sixth time’ (see G. Cousin and G. Deschamps, “Emplacement et ruines,” esp. 306–8; cf. CIL 6.1256; 8.14727; Frontinus, *De Aquis* 1.13; A. Brassac, “Une inscription”). So the combination of the twenty-sixth acclamation of Claudius as emperor and his twelfth regnal year points to a time between 25 January 52 and 1 August 52. Claudius would have written the letter, in which he mentions Gallio, to the people of Delphi in this period.

“Since Achaia was a senatorial province of praetorian rank, it was governed by a proconsul (Greek *anthypatos*, Acts 18:12; 13:7; Josephus, *Ant.* 14.10.21 §244). Such a provincial governor normally ruled for a year and was expected to assume his task by 1 June (Dio Cassius, *Roman History* 57.14.5) and to leave for the province by 1 April or mid-April at the latest (*ibid.*, 60.11.6; 60.17.3). Claudius’s letter mentions that Gallio had reported to him about conditions in Delphi on his arrival. This would mean that Gallio was already in Achaia by late spring or early summer of A.D. 52 and had written to Claudius about the situation that he found there. See B. Reicke, *EDNT*, 1.234.

The problem has always been to determine whether Gallio’s proconsular year stretched from a time in 51–52 or 52–53. A. Deissmann (*Paul*, 272), Finegan (*Handbook*, 317–18), and Hemer (*Book of Acts*, 119, 214, 244–76) espouse the former view and have influenced many others.

However, Seneca, Gallio’s younger brother, writes that Gallio developed a fever in Achaia and ‘took ship immediately,’ insisting that the disease was not of the body, but of the place (Ep. 104.2). Thus it seems that Gallio cut short his proconsular stay in Achaia and hurried home. Thus, having arrived in Achaia in the spring of 52 and reported on conditions there to Claudius, he spent the summer in Achaia, but departed from the province not later than the end of October 52, before *mare clausum* (the closed sea), when ship travel on the Mediterranean became impossible because of winter storms (see Acts 27:9). Hence it follows that Paul would have been haled before Gallio either in the late spring, summer, or even early fall of A.D. 52.”

[Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 620-23.]

¹⁶¹“Achaia was the most important part of Greece in Paul’s day. Situated north of the Peloponnesus, it was the center of political life especially from 280 to 146 B.C. In the latter year it became part of the Roman province of Greece created after the conquest of the Aegean Confederacy and the fall of Corinth to L. Mummius (see Pausanias, *Descriptio Graeciae* 7.16.7–10). Augustus made it an independent senatorial province in 27 B.C., with Neocorinth as the governor’s seat. The province included Attica, Boeotia, Thessaly, and the Peloponnesus; perhaps also Epirus. From A.D. 15 to 44 it was administered along with Macedonia as one imperial province. Later it became an independent province again, and Nero accorded it freedom in A.D. 67, which status it retained until A.D. 73 under emperor Vespasian. This is the province that Paul mentions in 1 Thess 1:7, 8; 1 Cor 16:15; 2 Cor 1:1; 9:2; 11:10; Rom 15:26.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 628-29.]

¹⁶²“The name of the proconsul was actually Lucius Annaeus Novatus. He was the son of M. Annaeus Seneca, a Roman *eques* and *rhetor*, and the older brother of the philosopher Seneca, who was the tutor of emperor Nero. Lucius Junius Gallio was the name that Seneca’s older brother assumed, when he was adopted by a wealthy senator friend and introduced into political life. Pliny the Elder tells about his consulship (*Naturalis Historia* 31.62), and Dio Cassius (*Roman History* 61.20.1) about his connections with the imperial court of Rome. His brother Seneca dedicated some of his writings to him, and after his brother came into political disfavor in the unsuccessful Pisonian Conspiracy, he too was compelled to commit suicide. On his relation to the emperor Claudius and a Delphi inscription that mentions him in Achaia, see the COMMENT above. Gallio is correctly called *anthypatos*, the Greek equivalent of Latin *proconsul*

[Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 628.]

¹⁶³“*The Jews rose up in a body against Paul and brought him to court*. Lit., ‘to the step, platform (*bēma*),’ i.e., the tribunal from which a magistrate addresses an assembly. The *bēma* was located in the center of the Corinthian *agora* and was flanked by rows of shops. Adornment of the *bēma* or Latin *rostra* (pl.), overlooking the forum, is still in evidence today.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 629.]

¹⁶⁴In Pisidian Antioch and Iconium, the Jewish leaders simply provoked the people into a willingness to take violent action against Paul. In Lystra, they managed to do the same thing with the Gentile population. In Philippi, the Gentile slave owners made a charge that had more appeal to the authorities: “[These men are disturbing our city; they are Jews and are advocating customs that are not lawful for](#)

politically savvy like the other Jewish leaders. Their charge was “This man is persuading people to worship God in ways that are contrary to the law,” λέγοντες ὅτι παρὰ τὸν νόμον ἀναπειθεί οὗτος τοὺς ἀνθρώπους σέβεσθαι τὸν θεόν (v. 13). Why would these Jewish leaders suppose that a Roman magistrate would have an ounce of interest in a squabble over proper obedience to the Jewish Torah?¹⁶⁵

Gallio detected this almost immediately, and thus didn’t even allow Paul to speak before he dismissed the hearing in disgust with these Jewish leaders for wasting his time:¹⁶⁶

14 μέλλοντος δὲ τοῦ Παύλου ἀνοίγειν τὸ στόμα εἶπεν ὁ Γαλλίων πρὸς τοὺς Ἰουδαίους· εἰ μὲν ἦν ἀδίκημά τι ἢ ῥαδιούργημα πονηρόν, ὃ Ἰουδαῖοι, κατὰ λόγον ἂν ἀνεσχόμην ὑμῶν, 15 εἰ δὲ ζητήματά ἐστιν περιλόγου καὶ ὀνομάτων καὶ νόμου τοῦ καθ’ ὑμᾶς, ὄψεσθε αὐτοί· κριτῆς ἐγὼ τούτων οὐ βούλομαι εἶναι. 16 καὶ ἀπήλασεν αὐτοὺς ἀπὸ τοῦ βήματος.

14 Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to the Jews, “If it were a matter of crime or serious villainy, I would be justified in accepting the complaint of you Jews; 15 but since it is a matter of questions about words and names and your own law, see to it yourselves; I do not wish to be a judge of these matters.” 16 And he dismissed them from the tribunal.

Thus the intention of these Jewish opponents to get rid of Paul backfired on them, and actually gave the Christian community some legal recognition in the city. The negativism of the verb ἀπήλασεν, dismissed, open the door for others present at the hearing to take out their frustrations on these Jewish leaders, and Sosthenes, their leader in particular: ἐπιλαβόμενοι δὲ πάντες Σωσθένην τὸν ἀρχισυνάγωγον ἔτυπτον ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ βήματος· καὶ οὐδὲν τούτων τῷ Γαλλίῳ ἔμελεν, Then all of them seized Sosthenes, the official of the synagogue, and beat him in front of the tribunal. But Gallio paid no attention to any of these things. Exactly who these people who beat Sosthenes were is not stated precisely by Luke,¹⁶⁷ although a few manuscript copyists (D E Ψ 33. 1739 M gig h sy sa) alter the text to read πάντες οἱ Ἕλληνες, all the Greeks. Another view is reflected by a few copyists (36. 453 pc) by altering the text to read πάντες οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, all the Jews. This assumes that the other Jews in the delegation turned on Sosthenes for failing to gain a hearing before Gallio. The proconsul paid no attention to this beating of Sosthenes in his presence: καὶ οὐδὲν τούτων τῷ Γαλλίῳ ἔμελεν.

us as Romans to adopt or observe” (Acts 16:20-21). At Thessalonica, Jewish leaders with the help of a mob charged Jason and other believers, not finding Paul and Silas, before the magistrates with “These people who have been turning the world upside down have come here also, and Jason has entertained them as guests. They are all acting contrary to the decrees of the emperor, saying that there is another king named Jesus.” (Acts 17:6-7). Paul managed to get out of Beroea before the Jewish leadership from Thessalonica could get to them. No charges were brought against Paul in Athens either by the synagogue leaders or local authorities.

¹⁶⁵“These Jews were at least residents in Corinth, but not certainly Corinthian citizens; if they were indeed citizens, they might have had a better basis to be heard by Gallio. The privileges accorded Jews in the Roman empire by Julius Caesar are listed by Josephus, *Ant.* 14.10.2–8 §§190–216; many of them were continued after the death of Caesar (cf. *Ant.* 19.5.2–3 §§278–91). Some of them applied to Jews resident outside of Judea; thus, for example, Claudius’s edict cited by Josephus, *Ant.* 19.5.3 §290: ‘Therefore it is right that Jews throughout the whole world that is under our domination should observe their ancestral customs without hindrance. I hereby order them too to avail themselves reasonably of this benefaction and not set at nought beliefs about gods held by other peoples, but to keep their own laws.’ In general, such Roman decisions reckoned with the legitimacy of the Jewish religion, the authority of its high priests, freedom from taxation, and protection from interference by Hellenistic authorities in religious and social customs; but they gave no guarantee that Roman authority would adjudicate intramural disputes.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 629.]

¹⁶⁶“ἀπέλυσεν (D* h) is a much weaker variant of ἀπήλασεν. Gallio had no patience with the Jews; if Luke’s account is correct he judged that they were wasting the time of his court; that is, either the charge was purely irrelevant (a matter of Jewish theology), or there was not even *prima facie* evidence to support the belief that Paul constituted a danger to the Empire. Either way, the precedent was a useful one.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 875.]

¹⁶⁷“Who beat Sosthenes? According to the Western followed by the Byzantine text (D E Ψ 0120 M gig h sy sa), πάντες οἱ Ἕλληνες. This is probably correct interpretation. Jews were often unpopular; they were for the moment out of favour and it would be safe to attack one of them. Cf. the reference to Crispus in v. 8. Ehrhardt (*Acts* 77f.) remarks on the inadequacy of Gallio’s police force. Alternatively πάντες may be determined by the preceding αὐτούς; all the Jews (so explicitly 36 453 pc) beat Sosthenes, presumably because he had mismanaged the case against Paul, failing even to secure a hearing. We have not however been told that Sosthenes was in charge of the proceedings. The reading that leaves πάντες undefined (P74 & A B pc vg bo) is to be preferred; and it may be that the two views mentioned above should be combined: the Jews beat Sosthenes for his inefficiency, the Greeks because he was a Jew and out of favour with the authorities.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 875.]



What is more interesting is this fellow Σωσθένης, *Sosthenes*. He is identified as τὸν ἀρχισυνάγωγον, *the synagogue ruler*. This is the identical title, ὁ ἀρχισυνάγωγος, given to Crispus (v. 8) when he converted to Christianity in Corinth. Either he succeeded Crispus as synagogue leader or else the synagogue had more than one leader -- probably the former. Even more interesting is that a man identified as a Christian brother by Paul is included as a sender of First Corinthians that was written from Ephesus to Corinth some three or so years later on Paul's third missionary: Παῦλος κλητὸς ἀπόστολος Χριστοῦ Ἰησοῦ διὰ θελήματος θεοῦ καὶ **Σωσθένης ὁ ἀδελφός**, *Paul, called to be an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and our brother Sosthenes* (1 Cor. 1:1). Assuming that this is the same Sosthenes, who at the time of the writing of this letter some three or so years later, he is now a believer living in Ephesus and serving God with Paul. This connection is not certain, but if it is correct, there is some kind of personal story behind the Christian conversion of this Jewish leader.



Luke closes out Paul's ministry in Corinth with the simple phrase: Ὁ δὲ Παῦλος ἔτι προσμεῖνας ἡμέρας ἱκανὰς τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἀποταξάμενος, *After staying there for a considerable time, Paul said farewell to the brothers* (18:18a). Unlike the province of Macedonia where Paul had to flee most of the cities, the province of Achaia was kinder to him. He left both Athens and Corinth by his own choice. Although Luke does not directly indicate it, the assumption is that Silas and Timothy were with him -- and perhaps also Luke -- as they left the city. But Luke does specifically indicate that Priscilla and Aquila were traveling with him when he left Corinth. The apostle could leave the city rejoicing that a solid congregation of believers now existed in the city. This community was made up of both Jews and Gentiles. What Paul most likely didn't realize at this point was how much time and energy he would have to devote to this congregation over the coming years, in as much as it would develop into a congregation continuously plagued with problems and issues.

From Paul's references¹⁶⁸ to this beginning ministry at Corinth in several of his letters, we gain some additional insights into his perspective about the congregation.

1 Cor 2:1-5. 2.1 When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. 2 For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3 And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. 4 My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, 5 so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.

2.1 Κάγω ἐλθὼν πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, ἦλθον οὐ καθ' ὑπεροχὴν λόγου ἢ σοφίας καταγγέλλων ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ θεοῦ. 2 οὐ γὰρ ἔκρινα τι εἶδέναι ἐν ὑμῖν εἰ μὴ Ἰησοῦν Χριστὸν καὶ τοῦτον ἐσταυρωμένον. 3 κάγω ἐν ἀσθενείᾳ καὶ ἐν φόβῳ καὶ ἐν τρόμῳ πολλῷ ἐγενόμην πρὸς ὑμᾶς, 4 καὶ ὁ λόγος μου καὶ τὸ κήρυγμά μου οὐκ ἐν πειθοῖ[ς] σοφίας [λόγοις] ἀλλ' ἐν ἀποδείξει πνεύματος καὶ δυνάμεως, 5 ἵνα ἡ πίστις ὑμῶν μὴ ᾖ ἐν σοφίᾳ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλ' ἐν δυνάμει θεοῦ.

Here Paul characterizes his style of preaching the Gospel when he first came to Corinth. In the background of Paul's terminology here is a deliberate rejecting of the style of the Sophist philosophers of his day who placed great value on flowery speech and eloquent delivery styles as being as important if not more important than the content of the speech. Paul, on the other hand, opted to present a simple Gospel message because his intent was that the Corinthians response to the Gospel would be guided by the Spirit of God rather than the persuasion of human speech.

1 Cor. 1:13-17. 13 Has Christ been divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? 14 I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, 15 so that no one can say that you were baptized in my name. 16 (I did baptize also the household of Stephanas; beyond that, I do not know whether I baptized anyone else.) 17 For Christ did not send me to baptize but to proclaim the gospel, and not with eloquent wisdom, so that the cross of Christ might not be emptied of its power.

13 μεμέρισται ὁ Χριστός; μὴ Παῦλος ἐσταυρώθη ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν, ἢ εἰς τὸ ὄνομα Παύλου ἐβαπτίσθητε; 14 εὐχαριστῶ [τῷ θεῷ] ὅτι οὐδένα ὑμῶν ἐβάπτισα εἰ μὴ Κρίσπον καὶ Γάϊον, 15 ἵνα μή τις εἴπῃ ὅτι εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα ἐβαπτίσθητε. 16 ἐβάπτισα δὲ καὶ τὸν Στεφανᾶ οἶκον, λοιπὸν οὐκ οἶδα εἴ τινα ἄλλον ἐβάπτισα. 17 οὐ γὰρ ἀπέστειλὲν με Χριστὸς

¹⁶⁸These include the following excerpts from Paul's letters: 1 Thess 3:6-13; 1 Cor 2:1-5; 1:13-17; 2 Thess 3:1-5; 1 Cor 3:5-10; 11:2,23; 15:1; 2 Cor 11:7-9.

βαπτίζειν ἀλλὰ εὐαγγελίζεσθαι, οὐκ ἐν σοφίᾳ λόγου, ἵνα μὴ κενωθῆ ὁ σταυρὸς τοῦ Χριστοῦ.

With the later divisiveness that erupted in the Corinthian church over their favorite preacher, Paul severely criticizes them for this. In the process he mentions only baptizing Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanas while he was helping the church get started. For him, the key aspect of his ministry calling was to present a simple Gospel message in the power of God's presence and blessing. Luke in Acts 18:8 specifically mentions the household of Crispus as being baptized by Paul. He alludes to many others hearing Paul, and then being baptized in a faith commitment to Christ. How many of these Paul baptized, or Silas or Timothy baptized is not known, for this statement comes after the arrival of Timothy and Silas from Macedonia.

1 Cor. 11:2. I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions just as I handed them on to you.

Ἐπαινῶ δὲ ὑμᾶς ὅτι πάντα μου μέμνησθε καί, καθὼς παρέδωκα ὑμῖν, τὰς παραδόσεις κατέχετε.

1 Cor. 11:23. For I received from the Lord what I also handed on to you,...

Ἐγὼ γὰρ παρέλαβον ἀπὸ τοῦ κυρίου, ὃ καὶ παρέδωκα ὑμῖν,...

1 Cor. 15:1. Now I would remind you, brothers and sisters, of the good news that I proclaimed to you, which you in turn received, in which also you stand,...

Γνωρίζω δὲ ὑμῖν, ἀδελφοί, τὸ εὐαγγέλιον ὃ εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν, ὃ καὶ παρελάβετε, ἐν ᾧ καὶ ἐστήκατε,...

In these brief references, Paul asserts his faithfulness to preach the message of the Gospel that he had received to the Corinthians. His message to them was not artificial nor humanly contrived. Rather, it came from God to Paul and from Paul to the Corinthians. He encourages the Corinthians to remain true to this message and not to deviate from it.

2 Cor 11:7-11. 7 Did I commit a sin by humbling myself so that you might be exalted, because I proclaimed God's good news to you free of charge? 8 I robbed other churches by accepting support from them in order to serve you. 9 And when I was with you and was in need, I did not burden anyone, for my needs were supplied by the friends who came from Macedonia. So I refrained and will continue to refrain from burdening you in any way. 10 As the truth of Christ is in me, this boast of mine will not be silenced in the regions of Achaia. 11 And why? Because I do not love you? God knows I do!

7 Ἡ ἀμαρτίαν ἐποίησα ἑμαυτὸν ταπεινῶν ἵνα ὑμεῖς ὑψωθῆτε, ὅτι δωρεὰν τὸ τοῦ θεοῦ εὐαγγέλιον εὐηγγελισάμην ὑμῖν; 8 ἄλλας ἐκκλησίας ἐσύλησα λαβὼν ὀψώνιον πρὸς τὴν ὑμῶν διακονίαν, 9 καὶ παρῶν πρὸς ὑμᾶς καὶ ὑστερηθῆς οὐ κατενάρκησα οὐθενός· τὸ γὰρ ὑστέρημά μου προσανεπλήρωσαν οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἐλθόντες ἀπὸ Μακεδονίας, καὶ ἐν παντὶ ἀβαρῆ ἑμαυτὸν ὑμῖν ἐτήρησα καὶ τηρήσω. 10 ἔστιν ἀλήθεια Χριστοῦ ἐν ἐμοὶ ὅτι ἡ καύχησις αὐτῆ οὐ φραγήσεται εἰς ἐμὲ ἐν τοῖς κλίμασιν τῆς Ἀχαΐας. 11 διὰ τί; ὅτι οὐκ ἀγαπῶ ὑμᾶς; ὁ θεὸς οἶδεν.

Here Paul reminds them that he did not ask them for money or support while he was in the city. A major motivation behind this grows out of the Sophist disclaimer in First Corinthians 2. These itinerant philosophers traveled the same region promoting their particular approach to life mostly as crooks seeking to drain every penny possible out of the suckers who would pay to hear their lectures. Much like modern TV preachers, these phoney teachers had no real interest in helping anyone except themselves. Paul's concern for the integrity of the Gospel pushed him to distance himself from such practices as far as possible. Thus he depended -- as Luke says in 18:1-3 -- on his trade skills in working with Priscilla and Aquila until Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia. They brought with them a very generous free will offering of funds that enabled Paul to devote full time to preaching the Gospel the remainder of his stay in Corinth. Here in Second Corinthians he explains his motives for doing this the way he did. That is, because of his love for the Gospel and for the Corinthians.

Lessons. What lessons can we learn from Paul's ministry at Corinth?

First, the lesson of adaptability. When Paul first arrived in the city he was by himself and facing a new city with need of the Gospel. He evidently had little funds to live off of, so he sought out Aquila and Priscilla who made their living in the same craft that he was trained in. In addition, they were believers and this was an added bonus during those beginning months in the city. So Paul adjusted to this situation in order to provide a base of operations for preaching the Gospel, which he began immediately to do every sabbath in the Jewish synagogue. When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, they brought with them a very generous love offering from the churches at Philippi, and probably Thessalonica and Beroea as well. This enabled Paul to devote full attention to the work of the Gospel. The hostility generated from this more intensive work led to his leaving the synagogue and use the home of Titius Justus, next door to the synagogue, as his base of operations.

What emerges from this is Paul's flexibility to adjust to changing situations in order to advance the Gospel. He adapted his finances to fit the situation as it shifted. More ministry was possible when he was freed up to 'go full time' than had been true up to that point. But he effectively used both situations to do the work of the Lord.

Second, the lesson of dependency on others. When Paul arrived in the city he quickly found the Christian couple to work with. They graciously provided him a place to stay and invited him to work their common craft together, τὸ ὁμότεχνον, in order to provide income for living expenses. God planted them in Paul's path to help him in this moment of his life. The blessing that came out of this was a life long close friendship with Priscilla and Aquila. The love offering from the newly established churches in Macedonia freed up Paul for more intensive focus on his preaching ministry. He learned to lean on these churches to assist him in their prayers and in their financial support of his ministry. These two sets of friendships allowed him to present the Gospel completely free of any suggestion that Christianity was after folk's money. Given the terrible reputation of the sophists as money grabbers, this was terribly important for this new religious movement to establish integrity toward people from the outset.

Third, the lesson of helping God's servants. Both Aquila and Priscilla along with the churches of Macedonia recognized a responsibility for hospitality and for supporting the ministry of Christian workers and missionaries. They generously gave out of their own resources to further the work of the Gospel through Paul's ministry. His letter later on to the church at Philippi is largely a thank you note to the church for their repeated support of his ministry since the church first began on this missionary journey. God doesn't call every believer to travel to distant places to share the Gospel, but He does give every believer the opportunity to support that work in distant places through their church, and its support of missions. In this experience at Corinth one sees the Great Commission of Matthew 28:16-20 at work in the first century.

Fourth, the lesson of consistency to mission. Paul came to Corinth to preach the Gospel, and during the eighteen months he was in the city that is what he did week in and week out. He faced opposition to this from the very people who should have most enthusiastically embraced his message of salvation in Christ. But in that consistent presentation of the Gospel several significant individuals in the city, both Gentile and Jewish, came to know Christ as Savior: Titius Justus, Crispus, and "many of the Corinthians" (18:8).

Did Paul experience ups and downs emotionally during this time. A few years later he will write to the Corinthians of periods of deep despair that he experienced in Asia on the third missionary journey.¹⁶⁹ But in the darkest of moments Paul learned to reach out to God with deeper confidence and trust in the Lord's leadership over his life.

Fifth, the lesson of trust in God's leadership. Toward the end of Paul's lengthy stay in the city, the opposition to him was growing and becoming more vicious. But the Lord reassured the apostle that He was watching over Paul and would protect him from harm in Corinth. When this opposition exploded in an attempt by the Jewish authorities to use the Roman officials to get rid of Paul, the Lord so controlled that situation that it 'back fired' in the face of the Jewish leaders in the city. And Paul was then able to leave the city peacefully without pressure from the authorities -- something he had not been able to do in the cities of Macedonia.

God knows what He is doing in guiding His servants through these kinds of crisis situations. Our task is to walk in obedience completely confident in God's leadership of our lives.

6.1.5 Return back to Antioch, Acts 18:18-22

Acts 18:18-22. 18 After staying there for a considerable time, Paul said farewell to the believers and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. At Cenchreae he had his hair cut, for he was under a vow. 19 When they reached Ephesus, he left them there, but first he himself went into the synagogue and had a discussion with the Jews. 20 When they asked him to stay longer, he declined; 21 but on taking leave of them, he said, "I will return to you, if God wills." Then he set sail from Ephesus. 22 When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch.

18 Ὁ δὲ Παῦλος ἔτι προσμείνας ἡμέρας ἰκανὰς τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἀποταξάμενος ἐξέπλει εἰς τὴν Συρίαν, καὶ σὺν αὐτῷ Πρίσκιλλα καὶ Ἀκύλας, κειράμενος ἐν Κεγχρεαῖς τὴν κεφαλὴν, εἶχεν γὰρ εὐχήν. 19 κατήνησαν δὲ εἰς Ἐφεσον

¹⁶⁹ **2 Cor. 1:8-11** 8 We do not want you to be unaware, brothers and sisters, of the affliction we experienced in Asia; for *we were so utterly, unbearably crushed that we despaired of life itself.* 9 *Indeed, we felt that we had received the sentence of death* so that we would rely not on ourselves but on God who raises the dead. 10 He who rescued us from so deadly a peril will continue to rescue us; on him we have set our hope that he will rescue us again, 11 as you also join in helping us by your prayers, so that many will give thanks on our behalf for the blessing granted us through the prayers of many.

8 Οὐ γὰρ θέλομεν ὑμᾶς ἀγνοεῖν, ἀδελφοί, ὑπὲρ τῆς θλίψεως ἡμῶν τῆς γενομένης ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ, ὅτι καθ' ὑπερβολὴν ὑπὲρ δυνάμιν ἐβαρῆθημεν ὥστε ἐξαπορηθῆναι ἡμᾶς καὶ τοῦ ζῆν· 9 ἀλλὰ αὐτοὶ ἐν ἑαυτοῖς τὸ ἀπόκριμα τοῦ θανάτου ἐσχίκαμεν, ἵνα μὴ πεποιθότες ὦμεν ἐφ' ἑαυτοῖς ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τῷ θεῷ τῷ ἐγείροντι τοὺς νεκρούς· 10 ὅς ἐκ τηλικούτου θανάτου ἐρρύσατο ἡμᾶς καὶ ῥύσεται, εἰς ὃν ἠλπικαμεν [ὅτι] καὶ ἔτι ῥύσεται, 11 συνυπουργούντων καὶ ὑμῶν ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν τῇ δεήσει, ἵνα ἐκ πολλῶν προσώπων τὸ εἰς ἡμᾶς χάρισμα διὰ πολλῶν εὐχαριστητῆ ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν.

κακείνους κατέλιπεν αὐτοῦ, αὐτὸς δὲ εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν διελέξατο τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις. 20 ἐρωτῶντων δὲ αὐτῶν ἐπὶ πλεῖον χρόνον μείναι οὐκ ἐπένευσεν, 21 ἀλλὰ ἀποταξάμενος καὶ εἰπὼν· πάλιν ἀνακάμψω πρὸς ὑμᾶς τοῦ θεοῦ θέλοντος, ἀνήχθη ἀπὸ τῆς Ἐφέσου, 22 καὶ κατελθὼν εἰς Καισάρειαν, ἀναβάς καὶ ἀσπασάμενος τὴν ἐκκλησίαν κατέβη εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν.

Luke begins the story of the return trip to Antioch with a brief indication of Paul having stayed ἔτι προσμείνας ἡμέρας ἱκανάς, a considerable time, in Corinth.¹⁷⁰ We know from Acts 18:11 that it at least covered eighteen months, and probably a longer period than this. What also becomes clear from 18:18 is that Paul was leaving a congregation of believers behind in the city. So sometime in the year of 51 AD the apostle set out for Jerusalem and Antioch on the homeward leg of the second missionary journey.

The apostle appropriately said his goodbyes to the newly established believing community in Corinth before leaving the city: τοῖς ἀδελφοῖς ἀποταξάμενος. The verb ἀποτάσσω is translated two different ways in this passage. In verse 18 the NRSV renders it “said farewell,” but in verse 21 “taking leave of them.” In both instances the term signals not a casual goodbye but a more formal expression of farewell. Implicit in this expression was a very real sense of separation from the believing community at Corinth as Paul set off for Syria.¹⁷¹ The expression εἰς τὴν Συρίαν does not exclude a more circular route through Jerusalem, but does signal clearly that the ultimate goal was to return back to the church that had commissioned this trip (cf. 15:40), the church at Antioch.

The missionary group of Paul, Silas, Timothy, and possible Luke, had two more to join them for part of the trip. This Christian couple, Priscilla and Aquila, joined the group on the first leg of the trip.¹⁷² When the group ar-

¹⁷⁰“ἔτι προσμείνας suggests the addition of a relatively short stay (ἡμέρας ἱκανάς is a Lucan expression; cf. 9:23, 43; 27:7; and the use of ἱκανός with other nouns) to the 18 months of v. 11. Paul was not driven out of Corinth.” [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 876.]

¹⁷¹“In the NT we find only the mid.: ‘to part from,’ least emphatically in Ac. 18:18, 21; perhaps stronger in 2 C. 2:13 (cf. 12b), also ‘to depart,’ Mk. 6:46 → line 11 f. The man who makes formal parting from his folks a presupposition of ἀκολουθεῖν (→ I, 213, 34 ff.) is said by Jesus not to be fit for the kingdom of God, Lk. 9:61 f.; cf. 1 K. 19:20 f. In Lk. 14:33 Jesus demands the radical renunciation of all possessions from the man who wants to join Him. On the verb here → lines 14 ff. On the whole topic → VI, 327, 18 ff.; 905, 5 ff.” [*Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 8:33.]

¹⁷²“**PRISCA** (PERSON) [Gk Priska (Πρισκα)]. Var. **PRISCILLA**. An important Christian missionary in the mid-1st century C.E., mentioned in 1 Cor 16:19, Rom 16:3–5, and 2 Tim 4:19. She is called by the diminutive ‘Priscilla’ in Acts 18:2–3 (historically reliable traditions; Lüdemann 1987: 206, 209–10); and 18:18, 26.

“Prisca was probably freeborn; epigraphical material indicates that ordinarily her name was not a slave name (Lampe StadtrChr, 151–52). She married Aquila, a tentmaker of Jewish origin. The couple were among the first Christians in Rome who also belonged to the synagogues of the city. Together with her husband and others, Prisca spoke of Christianity in at least one of the Roman synagogues. This Christian proclamation led to tumultuous controversies among the Roman Jews, so that the administration of the emperor Claudius in 49 C.E. expelled from Rome the main quarrelers, including Prisca and Aquila.

“The couple moved on to Corinth, where Paul first met and lodged with them and worked in Aquila’s workshop (Acts 18:2–3). After more than a year and a half (Acts 18:11, 2; cf. Lüdemann 1987: 207; Lampe StadtrChr, 7–8), they moved to Ephesus, where they again were active as missionary co-workers of Paul and formed a church in their home (1 Cor 16:19; cf. 2 Tim 4:19; Acts 18:18). The couple ‘risked their necks’ for Paul’s life (Rom 16:4), probably during this stay in Ephesus, where Paul was exposed to serious dangers (1 Cor 15:32; 2 Cor 1:8–9). The historicity of the Ephesian episode about Apollos told in Acts 18:26 is very doubtful (Lüdemann 1987: 215–16); *parrēsiazesthai* is a Lukan word; and there is a tension between v 25 and v 26: Apollos already taught ‘accurately’ about Jesus (v 25) before he was instructed ‘more accurately’ by Prisca and Aquila (v 26). Luke, the advocate of the apostle Paul, suggests in v 26 that Prisca and Aquila turned Apollos into a staunch supporter of Pauline Christianity. Pre-Lukan tradition (cf. vv 24–25), however, knew only that Apollos once worked in Ephesus at the same time as Paul, Prisca, and Aquila (cf. also 1 Cor 16:12, 19) and that Apollos was a Christian pneumatic (cf. also the Apollos party in Corinth, 1 Cor 1:12, in the context of the Corinthian pneumatics and enthusiasts, e.g., 1 Corinthians 12–14). As such, Apollos was more likely a competitor of Paul (1 Cor 1:12; cf. 3:10b, 12–15) on whom the apostle could not at all impose his plans while he stayed in Ephesus (1 Cor 16:12). We do not know whether Prisca and Aquila at least housed Apollos in Ephesus (Acts 18:26; Weiser 1985: 508).

“The couple has often been depicted as wealthy, with Prisca of even higher social status than Aquila since her name in most cases is placed before his (Rom 16:3; 2 Tim 4:19; Acts 18:18, 26; e.g., McNicol HBD, 823–24). But evidence points against the couple’s wealth. For a discussion, see AQUILA. References to Prisca before Aquila more likely indicate that she was even more active in church life than her craftsman husband. The context, Rom 16:21–23, shows that socially respected persons were not necessarily named first (Gaius with his spacious dwelling and Erastus, the city treasurer, appear last). Paul esteemed a person’s work for the church (Rom 16:3b, 4, 5a, 21), not the person’s status in the pagan society (cf. Gal 3:28). Luke, on the other hand, mentioning Prisca first in Acts 18:18, 26, would probably have liked to report her elevated social status if he had known about it; he frequently pointed out the participation of distinguished women in Christianity (e.g., Luke 8:3; Acts 17:4, 12; cf. 17:34; 16:14).

“Around 55 or 56 C.E. (after Claudius’ death in 54 C.E. and between the writing of 1 Corinthians and Romans), the couple returned to Rome (Rom 16:3–5). This last move may have been strategically motivated: Prisca and Aquila were possibly sent as Paul’s vanguard to Rome, where he wanted to establish a firm footing for his gospel before continuing to Spain. In Rome Prisca and Aquila

rives at Ephesus, they remain behind in the city, which from 1 Cor. 16:19, suggests that Ephesus became their home for quite some time. Over the period of their Christian service the first were in Rome, then Corinth, then Ephesus, and finally back in Rome. The name Πρίσκιλλα, *Priscilla*, actually comes from Πρίσκα, *Prisca*, the name Paul used name for this lady. Πρίσκιλλα is only used here (18:2, 18, 26), while Πρίσκα shows up Rom. 16:3, 1 Cor. 16:19, and 2 Tim. 4:19. Because her name shows up before that of her husband, Aquila, in the majority of instances -- something unusual in the ancient world -- many have concluded she was the more active church worker than her husband.



At the port city of Corinth, Cenchreae,¹⁷³ Paul had his hair cut as part of a Jewish vow: κειράμενος ἐν Κεγχρεαῖς τὴν κεφαλὴν, εἶχεν γὰρ εὐχήν. Grammatically some uncertainty over whose hair was cut -- Paul's or Aquila's -- surfaces, although from the context it is almost certainly that of Paul.¹⁷⁴ The reason for the haircut, which had to be done under precise religious guidelines, is given as εἶχεν γὰρ εὐχήν. A εὐχή, *vow*, represented a serious Jewish religious commitment to God; the same word also specifies a prayer (cf. Jas. 5:15). A Jewish vow is mentioned only here and in 21:23, where four Christian Jews in Jerusalem were completing a vow before God and would have their hair cut in ritual fashion in the temple as a sign of completion of the vow.¹⁷⁵ The cutting of the hair to signal the end of the vow here at Cenchreae is puzzling, since such vows with this ritual ceremony of hair cutting would have only been done in the temple at Jerusalem,¹⁷⁶ in the pattern described in Acts 21:23-26. Did Luke not understand the pattern of actions for a vow? Or, did he just follow his sources here without checking the provisions of such Jewish actions? We really don't know.

When the group reached Ephesus¹⁷⁷ from Cenchreae (a trip of about 375 plus kilometers), Priscilla and again hosted a house-church. They were the first to receive greetings from Paul in Romans 16, where Paul praised them. Their prominence as Paul's co-workers was remembered by the later church; 2 Timothy used their names for its fictitious historical frame, at the beginning of a list of greetings (4:19). Church tradition of the 6th century claimed that the house-church of Prisca and Aquila was the basis of the later Roman 'title'-church, 'Prisca,' on the Aventine. There is no proof for this connection or for any relation to the Roman catacomb 'Priscilla' (Lampe StadtrChr, 11, 24-25)."

[Peter Lampe, "Prisca (Person)" In vol. 5, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 467-68.]

¹⁷³"On Cenchreae cf. Rom. 16:1; it was one of the two seaports of Corinth, situated on the Saronic Gulf; the other, on the Gulf of Corinth, was Lechaem." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 877.]

¹⁷⁴"It is not clear whether this statement refers to Paul or to Aquila. Aquila is the nearest noun and is in the appropriate case (nominative), but Paul is the effective subject of the sentence and of the first singular verb in v. 19 (κατέλιπεν); he is moreover the character in whom Luke is supremely interested. Page (201) is confident that Paul is intended; Preuschen (113) and Ehrhardt (100) that it was Aquila who shaved his head (a sign, according to Ehrhardt, that he retained legalistic presuppositions)." [C. K. Barrett, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Acts of the Apostles*, International Critical Commentary (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 2004), 877.]

¹⁷⁵"Luke does not further explain the *euchē*, 'vow,' but it is usually understood to be the Nazirite vow that Jews sometimes made. *Nāzīr* means 'someone vowed,' i.e., consecrated to God by a vow. Originally, it denoted a person dedicated to the service of Yahweh for a certain period of time (Num 6:2; Judg 13:5-7). The details required of the person so vowing are set forth in Num 6:2-21, one of which was the shaving of the head (Num 6:9, 18; cf. Acts 21:24; Philo, *De Ebrietate* 1.2; Str-B, 2.80-89). The cutting of the hair prior to a voyage is, however, strange. Perhaps all that one is to gather from this notice is that the Lucan Paul somehow carries out requirements of a Jewish vow; he is again a model Jew in his conduct. See Weiser, *Appg.*, 498." [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 634.]

¹⁷⁶According to **Numbers 6:18**, the cut hair at the end of the vow was to be burned on the altar as a sacrifice to God: "Then the nazirites shall shave the consecrated head at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and shall take the hair from the consecrated head and put it on the fire under the sacrifice of well-being."

¹⁷⁷Ἐφεσος, οὐ, ἡ *Ephesus* (s. prec. entry; Hdt. et al.; oft. in ins; Joseph., *SibOr*; Ath. 17, 3), a seaport of Asia Minor in the plain

Aquila remained there, and Paul, following his standard pattern, went to the Jewish synagogue to present the Gospel to those in the synagogue: αὐτὸς δὲ εἰσελθὼν εἰς τὴν συναγωγὴν διελέξατο τοῖς Ἰουδαίοις.¹⁷⁸ Whether a congregation came out of this initial preaching of the Gospel in the synagogue at Ephesus, we don't know. Clearly from 18:27, by the time Apollos arrived in Ephesus¹⁷⁹ a community of Jewish Christians existed in the city. Either this group came out of Paul's preaching in the synagogue, or else, the church planting was done by Priscilla and Aquila as a follow-up to Paul's preaching. When Paul arrives back in Ephesus on the third missionary journey, he found a growing congregation of believers in the city (19:1). In 1 Cor. 16:19 (written from Ephesus on the 3rd missionary journey), Paul indicates that a house church met in the home of Priscilla and Aquila.



Paul's experience in the synagogue at Ephesus was much more positive than it had been in the cities of Macedonia and of Corinth: 20 ἐρωτῶντων δὲ αὐτῶν ἐπὶ πλείονα χρόνον μείναι οὐκ ἐπένευσεν, 21 ἀλλὰ ἀποταξάμενος καὶ εἰπὼν· πάλιν ἀνακάμψω πρὸς ὑμᾶς τοῦ θεοῦ θέλοντος, ἀνήχθη ἀπὸ τῆς Ἐφέσου, 20 When they asked him to stay longer, he declined; 21 but on taking leave of them, he said, "I will return to you, if God wills." Then he set sail from Ephesus.¹⁸⁰ At the end of the time there (unspecified by Luke), the request from the synagogue leaders was for Paul to stay on longer so they could understand more about the Gospel message he was presenting to them. Paul declined to stay longer, even though the opportunity was to present the Gospel to a very receptive audience.¹⁸¹

of the Cayster River. Famous for its temple of Artemis (s. Ἄρτεμις). The Christian congregation at Ephesus was either founded by Paul, or its numbers greatly increased by his ministry (GDuncan, St. Paul's Ephesian Ministry 1929). **Ac 18:19, 21, 24, 27 D; 19:1, 17, 26; 20:16f** (on Ephesian setting of Paul's speech **Ac 20:17–38**, s. DWatson, in *Persuasive Artistry* [GAKennedy Festschr.] '91, 185–86, n. 3); **1 Cor 15:32; 16:8**; subscr. v.l.; **Eph 1:1** (here it is lacking in P⁴⁶ Sin. B Marcion [who has instead: to the Laodiceans]; s. Harnack, *SBBerlAk* 1910, 696ff; JSchmid, *D. Eph des Ap.* Pls 1928; Goodsp., *Probs.* 171–73); **1 Ti 1:3; 2 Ti 1:18; 4:12; Rv 1:11** (the order Eph., Smyrna, Perg., Sardis also in an official ins, fr. Miletus [56–50 B.C.]: TWiegand, *Milet Heft 2* [city hall] p. 101f); 2:1.—OBenddorf, *Z. Ortskunde u. Stadtgesch. von Eph.* 1905; LBürchner, *Ephesos: Pauly-W. V* 1905, 2773–822; Österr. Archäol. Institut: *Forschungen in Ephesos Iff*, 1906ff, preliminary reports in the 'Jahreshefte' 1922ff; JKeil, *Ephesos2* 1930; WRamsay, *The Church in the Roman Empire before A.D. 170* 1912, 135–39; JBakhuizenvdBrink, *De oudchristelijke monumenten van Ephesus* 1923; VSchultze, *Altchr. Städte u. Landsch.* II/2, 1926, 86–120; Dssm., *D. Ausgrabungen in Eph.* 1926: *ThBl* 6, 1927, 17–19, *The Excav. in Eph.: Biblical Review* 15, 1930, 332–46; RTonneau, *E. au temps de S. Paul: RB* 38, 1929, 5–34; 321–63; PAntoine, *Dict. de la Bible, Suppl.* II '34, 1076–1104; FRienecker, *Der Eph.* (w. illustrated supplement) '34; *BA* 8, '45, 61–80; FMiltner, E., *Stadt d. Artemis u. d. Joh.* '54; HKoester, *Ephesos, Metropolis of Asia* '66; SFriesen, *Bar* 19, '93, 24–37. *S. Δημήτριος 2.*—OEANE II 252–55. *Die Inschriften von Ephesos*, 8 vols. '79–84. GHorsley, *NovT* 34, '92, 105–68.

[William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 3rd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 418.]

¹⁷⁸“The D-Text variants mainly fill gaps in the narrative. The opening clarifies the subject (and keeps the focus on Paul). Luke does not worry about time, so to speak. When Paul shows up, the synagogue will be in session (cf. 13:13–14). The D-Text makes him wait for the Sabbath. In v. 20, the editor assures us that the Jews of Ephesus did not want Paul to stay longer so that he could enjoy the sites. Verse 21 provides an explanation for Paul's odd abandonment of a, for once, receptive synagogue audience.¹⁰³ Acts 20:16 is the probable basis for this.¹⁰⁴ Verse 22, which replaces the vague and awkward reference in v. 21 with a logical statement, also manifests the pedantic quality of the D-Text, and the omission of Priscilla is another example of its tendency to minimize the presence of women.¹⁰⁵” [Richard I. Pervo, *Acts: A Commentary on the Book of Acts*, ed. Harold W. Attridge, *Hermeneia—A Critical and Historical Commentary on the Bible* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2009), 455–56.]

¹⁷⁹“Ephesus was the seat of the governor of the Roman province of Asia; see NOTES on 2:9; 6:9. In Paul's day it was an Aegean seaport near the mouth of the Cayster River. The river was then navigable up to the city, which lay about 5 km to the east, but which during the course of the centuries since then has silted up, so that it no longer seems to be a seaport town. It was a place where Jews had been granted Ephesian citizenship (Josephus, *Ant.* 12.3.2 §§125–26). For many Greek inscriptions from Ephesus at this period, see I. Levinskaya, “Asia Minor,” *The Book of Acts in Its Diaspora Setting* (BAFCS 5), 137–52, esp. 143–48. Because Ephesus was the chief market for Asia Minor, it was a city of enormous wealth. It is now mentioned for the first time in Acts and will appear again in 18:21, 24, 27; 19:1, 17, 26; 20:16, 17. It becomes the center of Paul's evangelizing activity on Mission III.” [Joseph A. Fitzmyer, vol. 31, *The Acts of the Apostles: A New Translation With Introduction and Commentary*, Anchor Yale Bible (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2008), 634.]

¹⁸⁰One irony of this quick visit to Ephesus is that now for the first time Paul was able to preach the Gospel in Asia. He had wanted to do so at the beginning of the second missionary journey (cf. 16:6) but God had said no. Now at the end of this trip he gets an opportunity to do so. And later on the third journey he will spend more time in the city of Ephesus in Asia than any other single city of his entire ministry, outside of Tarsus after his conversion, and the lengthy ministry in Antioch prior to the first missionary journey. God's ways of opening and closing doors for ministry are absolutely fascinating! It's all a matter of timing, that is, God's timing. .

¹⁸¹“Why the rush to get to Palestine? The Western text provides an answer, adding to v. 21 the note that Paul was hurrying to Je-
Page 365

He promised to return to the city later, assuming God's leadership. Paul here follows the guidelines set forth by James in 4:13-17 of planning for the future inside the will of God.

Very likely this positive experience initially in Ephesus laid the foundation for the long, almost three year ministry in the city that Paul would have on the third missionary journey (Acts 19:1-20:1; cf. 19:10). During that time the church exploded in growth and impact all across the region. Evidently during this later ministry in the city, the church began making an impact on the non-Jewish part of the region, since the focus here on the second missionary journey is on the Jewish synagogue.

Verse 22 describes very briefly the last segment of the trip back home: καὶ κατελθὼν εἰς Καισάρειαν, ἀναβὰς καὶ ἀσπασάμενος τὴν ἐκκλησίαν κατέβη εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν, **When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church, and then went down to Antioch.**

The Greek text simply says ἀναβὰς καὶ ἀσπασάμενος τὴν ἐκκλησίαν κατέβη εἰς Ἀντιόχειαν, **after having gone up and greeted the church, he went down to Antioch.** Jerusalem is not mentioned specifically by name, but Luke leaves no doubt but that he is talking about the church at Jerusalem because of 'going up' from Caesarea, and then 'going down' to Antioch. The only place in all of Palestine that this kind of terminology would be used in regard to was Jerusalem.

If the editor of the Western text tradition¹⁸² that adds the clause δεῖ μέ παντῶς τὴν ἐόρτην τὴν ἐρχομένην ποιῆσαι εἰς Ἱερουσόλυμα, **it is necessary for me by all means to participate in the coming feast at Jerusalem,** in verse 21 as Paul's reason for declining the invitation to remain in Ephesus is correct, then Paul was in Ephesus sometime prior to the Passover festival in Jerusalem that took place in late March to early April of 51 AD. But this is a late addition to the manuscript text, and clearly was not in what Luke originally had written.

Although Luke rapidly skims over these three cities of Caesarea, Jerusalem, and even Antioch, the group of missionaries would have been required, by the standard protocol of that day, to have spent some time in each city greeting and visiting with the Christian community at each place.¹⁸³ Luke only mentions that Paul ἀσπασάμενος τὴν ἐκκλησίαν, **greeted the church,** in Jerusalem. The verb ἀσπάζομαι, when referencing a visit in person with someone else, signaled a wide range of greetings from informal to very official visits.¹⁸⁴ In no way

¹⁸²D Ψ 614. 1175. 1505 M gig w sy.

¹⁸³The travel distances alone required considerable time to get from point A to point B. Caesarea to Jerusalem, 117 kilometers; Jerusalem to Antioch, 533 kilometers. With around 25 kilometers being the maximum walking distance per day, you do the math: about 5 days to Jerusalem; about 22 days if they went overland from Jerusalem to Antioch, perhaps a little less if by ship from Caesarea to Antioch after returning to Caesarea from Jerusalem. Thus logistically close to a month just for travel time alone, not counting time spent visiting in each city, is involved.

¹⁸⁴“ἀσπάζεσθαι (etymology uncertain) means to effect ἀσπασμός, i.e. mostly ‘to proffer the greeting’ which is customary on entering a house or meeting someone on the street or parting. ἀσπασμός consists in such gestures as ‘embracing,’¹ ‘kissing,’² ‘offering



Ephesus in Paul's Day

Ephesus was a thriving port in the first century, situated on the only major east-west road system in the area. Nearly a century had passed since it had last been invaded. The city was proud and prosperous, and a strong Jewish community thrived there.



GRAPHIC BY KARBEL MULTIMEDIA, COPYRIGHT 2011 LOGOS BIBLE SOFTWARE

were these stop overs just to say a quick hello. At minimum a few days were spent at each city before moving on to the next one.

When the traveling missionaries reached home base at Antioch, there must have been considerable celebration by the church upon hearing the report of God's work on this second journey. It had been three or more years since Paul and Silas had left Antioch on this journey. Very likely something akin to what had happened at the end of the first journey, Acts 14:27, took place at the church.¹⁸⁵ One can easily imagine curiosity abounding about how successful this trip was with Silas rather than with Barnabas, especially after the rocky start of the second trip (Acts 15:36-41). Now there was Timothy with the group, a stranger to the church at Antioch at this point. How did he become a part of the group. Perhaps -- and probably -- Luke was with the group as well. His story would have made for interesting conversation in the church.



Conclusion

What can we learn from the second missionary journey of Paul and Silas? In some five places above possible applications to today were set forth from events at particular cities on the journey. Now some general observations about the journey need to be concluded.

First, God works through human failures in order to accomplish His purposes. The beginning of the second missionary journey was shaky and grew out of a conflict between Paul and Barnabas. The disagreement over Barnabas' nephew, John Mark, could have turned this adventure into a purely humanly motivated activity with the two missionaries both retracing different segments of the first missionary journey. To the credit of both Paul and Barnabas, their disagreement did not prevent them from seeking to do God's will in advancing the Gospel. The end result was two missionary teams working in separate regions for the Gospel.



In no way does this justify the sharp disagreement between these two men. But it does demonstrate what God is able to accomplish in spite of us, rather than because of us. In providential timing Silas was at Antioch and prepared to go with Paul on what I suspect proved to be the greatest adventure of his life. He had unique qualifications as an appointed representative of the church in Jerusalem that Barnabas did not possess. God would use that significantly in helping the already established churches of Syria and Cilicia understand clearly the agreement about Gentiles that had been reached in the conference in Jerusalem.

How many times over the centuries has God worked out of human failure to further the cause of the Gospel? Anyone who has been in church life for any length of time is keenly aware of this, for similar stories of God's blessings in spite of will abound in every congregation.

Second, newly formed churches need encouragement and assistance. The first phases of the second missionary journey centered on these two missionaries revisiting already existing churches in three provinces:

the hand,³ and even sometimes *proskynesis*⁴ (→ προσκυνεῖν). It also consists in words, especially a set form of greeting. There is a good example in Herm. v., 4, 2, 2: ἀσπάζεται με λέγουσα· Χαῖρε σύ, ἄνθρωπε, καὶ ἐγὼ αὐτὴν ἀνησπασάμην· Κυρία, χαῖρε (cf. 1, 1, al; 1, 2, 2 and Lk. 1:27, 29). A special, official form of ἀσπασμός is the 'homage' paid to an overlord or superior. This can be accomplished a. by a visit: Jos. Ant., 1, 290; 6, 207. ἀσπάζεσθαι can thus mean 'to pay someone a ceremonious call,' 'to pay an official visit to a high dignitary,'⁵; ἀσπασμός itself has here the force of an 'official call,' e.g., P. Flor., 296, 57: ἡ ἐποφειλομένη ὑμῶν προσκύνησις καὶ ἀσπασμός μου (cf. Ac. 25:13: ἀσπασάμενοι τὸν Φῆστον). Homage can also be paid b. by acclamation, cf. Plut. Pomp., 12 (I, 624e): αὐτοκράτορα τὸν Πομπήιον ἡσπασάντο, 13 (I, 625c): μεγάλη φωνὴ Μάγνον ἡσπασάτο (cf. Mk. 15:18 in the NT).” [Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley and Gerhard Friedrich, electronic ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 1:496.]

¹⁸⁵Acts 14:27. When they arrived, they called the church together and related all that God had done with them, and how he had opened a door of faith for the Gentiles.

παραγενόμενοι δὲ καὶ συναγαγόντες τὴν ἐκκλησίαν ἀνήγγελλον ὅσα ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς μετ’ αὐτῶν καὶ ὅτι ἤνοιξεν τοῖς ἔθνεσιν θύραν πίστεως.

Syria, Cilicia, and Galatia (Acts 15:41-16:5). In all three provinces Luke's summarizing statement about the impact of these visits was that the churches were strengthened: ἐπιστηρίζων τὰς ἐκκλησίας (v. 41) and ἐστερεοῦντο τῇ πίστει καὶ ἐπερίσσευον τῷ ἀριθμῷ καθ' ἡμέραν (v. 5). The faith of the believers was deepened and the outreach of the churches increased.

At times a casual reading of the first two missionary journeys leaves the impression that missionary work in some particular city seldom lasted over a few weeks, and that a thriving church was always left behind. But when a closer reading of the Acts text is done, one begins to realize that the cultivation and nurturing of these churches was a process that included repeated visits with teaching and encouragement of each congregation. This took place over a period of years, in order to help the congregations become strong and effective in ministry and outreach.

This is an important principle for modern missionary strategy. Don't expect a congregation to be able to thrive immediately on its own without the help of trained and experienced missionaries. Take care of these churches! Help them stabilize and grow.

Third, God honors kept promises. When the conference in Jerusalem came to an end, agreements were reached between the leadership in Jerusalem and the representatives of the church at Antioch. This agreement was formalized in a written letter (Acts 15:23-29). In these beginning provinces with already existing churches this letter was read and explained to them as promised to the leaders in Jerusalem in the letter: τοῖς κατὰ τὴν Ἀντιόχειαν καὶ Συρίαν καὶ Κιλικίαν ἀδελφοῖς τοῖς ἐξ ἔθνῶν, [to the brothers of Gentile origin in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia](#). This agreement was carefully honored as 16:4 indicates: [As they went from town to town, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem](#). Ὡς δὲ διεπορεύοντο τὰς πόλεις, παρεδίδοσαν αὐτοῖς φυλάσσειν τὰ δόγματα τὰ κεκριμένα ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ πρεσβυτέρων τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις. One important point Luke makes is regarding τὰ δόγματα, [the decisions](#), not the decision. The agreement reached was a multifaceted agreement with several aspects. Just reading the letter, one would not sense this. This implies the space for Paul's somewhat different interpretation of this agreement in Gal. 2:6-10.

promises / *kept*

When groups of believers reach agreement with one another over some issue, it is important for that agreement to be honored. The early church placed high value on integrity of character. Promises made to one another were promises made to God. And these must be honored. Having lived through the era of empty promises and broken agreements in the Southern Baptist Convention in the 80s and 90s as a SBC seminary professor, I witnessed first hand the horrific damage done to the Gospel by Christian leaders whose word meant nothing, and contained no integrity. The enduring legacy of such distrust and lack of integrity was an official censor by the Executive Board of the convention to enforce the decisions on the various SBC institutions because the leaders of these institutions were not trusted to obey what the executive board had mandated. It's no wonder that the SBC is now in the slow pains of a death plunge as a denomination.

Fourth, God has interesting ways of guiding His servants in ministry. When Paul and Silas finished revisiting the churches of Galatia established on the first missionary journey, their plan was to continue westward into Asia, namely Ephesus the political capital of the province. But God said no. So the missionaries turned northward through the central regions of Phrygia and Galatia intending to go into the northern provinces along the south shore of the Black Sea. But at the edge of Bithynia, God against shut the door of opportunity. This time the missionaries turned westward and traveled to Troas on the northwestern coast. There God opened the door to go to the very Greek province of Macedonia. See Acts 16:6-10 for this intriguing story.

Discovering God's will in the midst of ministry is often a trial and error process. God never writes His will across the sky in big, bold letters. Instead, He leads His servants while they are engaging in committed service of the Gospel. One of the ways this is done is through closing and opening doors of opportunity. When Paul arrived at Troas, he had no idea of where God's leadership would take the missionary team next. But Europe awaited them, and some years of intense ministry stood before them in Macedonia and Achaia, the two central Roman provinces of ancient Greece. And then on the way back to Antioch, where did Paul go? To Ephesus of all places! God in His timing said to Paul that now was the right time for him to make a stop in Asia after the passing of a couple or so years after being on the eastern side of the province without permission to enter it.

All this reminds every servant of God that knowing what God wants you to do is discovered in the midst of doing ministry, not while waiting for signals of God's will. One opportunity leads to another, and at least in hind-

sight you look back to realize clearly the hand of God guiding you through all of that. Growing up in semi-poverty in the edge of west Texas in the 1940s and 50s, I could never have imaged God's will putting me on the faculty of the largest and one of the most prestigious seminaries of North America, being a guest lecturer and visiting research professor at four of the most famous universities in Germany, and concluding ministry in the sunset years of my life serving Him in Central America. None of these ministry opportunities was anticipated in advance. But in God's own timing, each one opened up. That's just the way our God works! And it is a marvelous method for allowing us to do ministry in behalf of the Gospel. It puts us completely in a faith dependence on God to lead us.

Fifth, take advantage of every situation to share the Gospel.

What we observed from Paul on the first missionary journey was continued on the second trip. In every place that he and Silas traveled to, they sought to share Christ with whoever would listen. On this trip they traveled through the Roman provinces of Syria, Cilicia, Galatia, Macedonia, Achaia, and Asia (at Ephesus) preaching Christ and helping establish churches. They faced all kinds of reactions from people all the way from enthusiastic acceptance of the Gospel to bitter hostility to this message. They got to stay in a few places for considerable lengths of time, most notably in Corinth, for a very productive ministry. But in some places opposition forced them to flee after a couple of weeks or so, notably Thessalonica. Yet in every place, where they traveled to, a church was left behind as an ongoing witness to the Gospel.

We dare not wait for nor expect the 'ideal' place for doing ministry. We must seize the opportunities as they present themselves. In that way God can bless and accomplish spiritual good that is lasting and life changing.

Sixth, be flexible in your approach to ministry.

In Philippi, Paul worked with a group of women to begin the church there. Incidentally, this church became the most 'mission minded' church of all that Paul started. In Athens, his speech to the Greek philosophers was instrumental in establishing the church there. In Corinth the church began in the more standard way for Paul through his preaching the Gospel first in the Jewish synagogue. But as he had experienced repeatedly from the first missionary journey, even in the Jewish synagogues the Gentile 'God fearers' present were more receptive to the Gospel than the Jewish members of the synagogue.

Paul had a basic plan of doing missions: to the Jew first and then to the Gentile (cf. Rom. 1:16). But this was no cookie cutter plan that had to be implemented the exact same way every time. His major objective was to preach the Gospel and from the converts to Christ a church would be formed. With the brief stop in Ephesus on the way back to Antioch, all he was able to do was preach the Gospel in the synagogue. Others, most likely Priscilla and Aquila, began the Christian community in the city (Acts 18;19-21).

Even in his approach to preaching we see this flexibility. A comparison of his sermon to the Greek philosophers at Athens (17:22-31) with the one to the synagogue community in Pisidian Antioch (13:16-41) is a study in dramatically different ways to present the Gospel, ways that are custom made for the individual audiences. There is a powerful example in this for us today!

The second missionary journey coupled with the first one and the Jerusalem conference tucked between the two marks a huge turning point for the Christian movement. This period from about 46 to 51 AD signals a major shift toward uncircumcised Gentiles flooding into Christianity in growing numbers all across the northeastern Mediterranean world. This would become very controversial, not only in Judaism but inside Christianity itself. But the trend was set. And Christianity could never go back to just being a sect inside Judaism, along side the Pharisees and Sadducees. The decade of the 50s would see this trend expanding during Paul's third journey, along with the apostle's intense efforts at bridge building between these two ethnic groups inside the church



Learning Flexibility



