

## **Acts 16: PAUL'S SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY**

### **Introduction**

Acts 15 ended with the account of the dispute due to personal conviction and personality clash between Paul and his original partner, Barnabas, over the decision to bring John Mark or not for the second journey. John Mark had quit on them during the first journey. Unfortunately, the dispute could not be resolved, separating the two original missionary partners. Barnabas took John Mark, and Paul took another disciple, Silas, with him. However, Paul and Silas met a young man named Timothy at their first stop and decided to bring him along. Timothy later became one of the closest allies, mentee, spiritual son, and successor of Paul. The books of 1st and 2nd Timothy were written to him from Paul.

The original purpose of the second missionary journey was to strengthen the churches planted during the first missionary journey (Acts 15:36). The journey lasted about three years, from 49 AD to 52 AD, and spans through Acts 16 to 18. It was full of many notable occurrences, one of them being Paul's vision of the man of Macedonia (Verses 6 to 10), which has become a famous lesson in the role of the Holy Spirit in the work of missions. Please note this passage as you read.

The second important occurrence is the conversion of a businesswoman of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth in Philippi. Luke's decision to record this conversion among many is intriguing. Perhaps it was due to being a wealthy and influential woman (uncommon in those times). She was seemingly the first Gentile convert in Europe and the first believer to open her home as a worship center for European Christians. She is believed to have become a great benefactor of Paul's ministry and one of the great mothers of faith. Lydia of Thyatira is considered a saint in the Catholic Church.

The third occurrence recorded in Acts 16 is the imprisonment of Paul and Silas (as a result of the unsolicited deliverance of a possessed slave girl), their miraculous deliverance, and the resultant conversion of the jailer and his household. Many scholars wonder if this vindicated Paul for his refusal to take John Mark with him.

### **Study the Scriptures: Read the Passage Acts 16:1-40**

Note your thoughts as you read:

Write down any questions that come to mind as you read:

### Think Through the Following Questions

1. What do we know about Timothy? Acts 16:1-5, 2 Timothy 1:3-7? What does the inclusion of Timothy, a believer of mixed heritage, in the missionary team suggest about the universality of the Gospel message?
2. Why do you think Paul decided to circumcise Timothy, despite his own personal conviction and given the conclusions of the Jerusalem Council?
3. What lessons can we learn from Paul's encounter with the Holy Spirit, preventing him from preaching in the Province of Asia and Bithynia? What does this teach us about obedience even when we don't understand?
4. What strikes you as you read about the conversion of Lydia, the dealer of Purple? Why do you think Luke chose to detail this account out of all the conversions that must have occurred?
5. What do we learn about the spirit of divination and fortune-telling from this passage (verses 16-19)?
6. Given the kind of positive message coming from the spirit possessing the slave girl, why do you think Paul saw the need to cast out the spirit, and what does it say about believers being discerning of the spirit behind even sometimes positive messages from others?
7. What does the account of Paul and Silas singing hymns in prison teach us about maintaining faith amidst adversity?
8. The imprisonment of Paul and Silas eventually led to a great conversion of people who might not have otherwise heard the gospel. What does this teach us?

**Lessons Learned: Are there any new things you learned from this passage today?**

**Application: How do you think this will impact your thinking and/or actions going forward?**