

Two Year Bible Trek

Week 91

Acts 15:36-21:14

Key Concepts: The key concept in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles is that the Holy Spirit works through the Apostles to create a renewed community of faith based on the reality of Jesus of Nazareth as the long awaited savior of Israel and the world.

Background: In this portion of Acts we walk with Paul on his second and third missionary journeys.

Brief Summary: Paul and Barnabas part ways (15:36-15:41) Paul and Barnabas planned to visit the churches they had planted, but disagreed over whether or not to take John Mark with them. John Mark had lost the confidence of Paul when John Mark had not been willing to engage in some difficult work. At this point Paul chose Silas and headed out on his next journey.

Timothy joins the team (16:1-16:10) Paul and Silas travel to Derbe and Lystra where they meet Timothy, whose mother was Jewish and whose father was Greek. Timothy, who was part of the church in Lystra, is circumcised by Paul and joins them on their journey to Troas. There Paul is given a vision of Christ calling them to go and preach in Macedonia.

The team sails for Philippi (16:11-40) On their arrival they meet a woman named Lydia, who is a seller of purple goods. She is converted and invites Paul, Silas and Timothy to stay with her. While in the city, a slave girl who had a spirit of divination, follows them, crying out that they were servants of God most high. Paul, tiring of this, commands the spirit to come out of her. When it does, her owners drag Paul to the magistrate who has him flogged and thrown into jail. In jail the men sing hymns and ultimately convert the jailer. The men are freed when the magistrate learns that they are Roman citizens.

Paul travels to Athens (17:1-34) Paul travels to Thessalonica where he preaches in a synagogue and both Jews and Gentiles are converted. This creates such a stir in the city that Paul is forced to leave for Beroea, where the same thing happens. Paul then travels to Athens. There he debates the philosophers in the Areopagus. Paul explains the story of Christ, complete with the resurrection. Though many people dismiss him several people believe and a church is formed.

Paul travels to Corinth (18:1-22) Paul argues for Christ in the synagogue and some Jews are converted. However, Jewish opposition is so intense that Paul turns his attention to the Gentiles and many are converted. From there he travels with Priscilla and Aquila to Ephesus, and then on alone to his home base in Caesarea.

The third missionary journey begins (18:23-19:41) Paul travels back to Ephesus where he spends two years preaching and teaching while the church grows rapidly. In this section we also meet Apollos, a Jewish convert and great preacher, and we also learn of some of Paul's miracles. Paul's time in Ephesus ends with a confrontation with an idol maker named Demetrius who organizes his fellow idol makers who try to run Paul out of town because his preaching endangers their businesses.

Paul's return to Palestine (20:1-21:14) Paul travels through parts of Greece and finally by land and boat to Miletus. There he meets with the elders of the church, recounts his mission, then encourages and prays with them. Paul and his friends then travel toward Jerusalem, meeting believers all along the way. This section ends with a prediction that Paul will be imprisoned if he goes to Jerusalem. Regardless Paul chooses to go, even if it means his death.

1. What do you make of the fact that there were churches the Apostles did not plant?
2. How do these stories affect your impression of Paul?
3. With which of Paul's companions do you most associate?