

## Acts 15:36-16:40

### On The Road Again!

- Vs. 15: 36 “Come, let us return and visit the brethren in every city where we proclaimed the word of the Lord and see how they are.”
- Vs.15: 37-41 Paul and Barnabas have a dispute about taking Mark (Barnabas’ cousin) with them on their journey, so Barnabas and Mark go to Cyprus and Paul chooses Silas (a Jewish Christian) to accompany him to Antioch in Syria and on toward Asia Minor. Their purpose was to strengthen the churches already established on the last missionary journey. The date for the second journey is 50-52 AD.

See #4 from the study questions under “for application” on Acts 15: 36-40. Discuss.

- Vs. 16: 1-2 Back tracking through Derbe and Lystra they meet Timothy. He was the son of a Jewish mother who was a believer and a Greek father and well spoken of by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium.
- Vs. 16: 3 Paul wants to take Timothy with them so he circumcises him because the Jews where they are going know Timothy’s father is Greek.

Even though Paul doesn’t believe circumcision is necessary for Gentiles, he still opts for the rite to be performed before Timothy goes with them. Why?

- Vs. 16: 4-5 Paul, Silas, and Timothy deliver the message from the Council of Jerusalem and the churches are strengthened in the faith and increase in numbers daily.
- Vs.16: 6-10 Passing through Phrygia and Galatia they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit from taking the message to Asia (northward) and came to Troas (a seaport on the Aegean) where Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia pleading with him to come “help us.” They immediately went, concluding that God wanted them to preach the gospel in Greece (Macedonia).

The narrative shifts at this point from Luke being a spectator/author to him being a participant in the ministry as a traveling companion of Paul and friends. See footnote from verse 10 on pp. 234.

- Vs. 16: 11-12 They set sail from Troas through Samothrace and Neopolis and come to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city in the district of Macedonia. \* See #3 in the study questions.
- Vs.16: 13-15 On the sabbath they went as accustomed to the place of prayer and spoke to the women gathered there. A pious woman of Thyatiria opened her heart to the

gospel and was baptized along with her whole house and then offered the disciples hospitality at her home.

- Vs. 16: 16-18 As the disciples were again on their way to the place of prayer, a slave girl possessed of a spirit of divination\* shouts after them, “These are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.” This went on for many days and finally Paul gets annoyed and exorcises the spirit.

\* Divination is the effort to learn the future by occult means and was a common practice in the Near East in ancient times. Its practice was forbidden under Mosaic Law and declared an abomination. The punishment for illicit divination was death (Lev. 19:31; 20:6). Magic and sorcery were the occult arts that manipulated natural and spiritual forces. The Church, in harmony with Scripture, teaches that all forms of magic and sorcery are contrary to revealed religion, and especially reprehensible when practiced with the intention of doing harm and involving the invocation of demons (CCC 2117).

- Vs. 16: 19-21 The owners of the slave girl are upset that they have lost their hope of income from the girl and dragged the disciples before the magistrate.
- Vs. 16: 22-24 The disciples are set upon by the crowd, ordered beaten with rods by the magistrate and thrown into prison and put in stocks.
- Vs. 16: 25-26 As Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns around midnight, an earthquake shook the foundations of the prison and the doors were opened and their chains unfastened.
- Vs. 16: 27-30 When the jailer woke and saw the doors ajar he was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped but Paul called out to him that they were all there in their cells. He fell at their feet in fear and asked “what must I do to be saved?”
- Vs. 16: 31-34 They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household.” After they spoke to him, he washed their wounds and was baptized along with his whole family. He took them to his home and fed them and rejoiced that he had believed in God.
- Vs. 16:35-40 The magistrate sent to the jailer to release the prisoners but Paul said, “They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now cast us out secretly? No! let them come themselves and take us out.” \*The magistrates apologized to them and released them but asked them to leave the city. They went to Lydia’s, exhorted the brethren and they departed. (Notice here Luke says “they,” departed, not we departed. Did he stay there or go on with them?)

\*Roman citizenship carried certain privileges not shared by everyone under Roman rule. Most importantly they were entitled to a thorough investigation of any charges brought against them and exempt from degrading forms of punishment. Because Paul and Silas were Roman citizens unlawfully treated, they felt the injustice should not go overlooked. Paul will pull this ace out of his sleeve again later on in Acts.