

# ***The Book of Acts***

## ***The Second Missionary Journey***

Lesson #9 for September 1, 2018

Scriptures: Acts 16-18:10; Romans 3:28; Galatians 2:16; 1 Corinthians 1:23.

1. This lesson will focus on details from the second missionary journey of Paul and Silas. Back in Antioch and working to further the evangelistic work in that area, Paul and Barnabas began talking about another missionary journey. Fortunately, or unfortunately, they sharply disagreed about whether or not to take John Mark—who had left or deserted them during the first missionary journey. As a result, Barnabas took his nephew John Mark and went to Cyprus while Paul took Silas and started out on his second missionary journey.
2. So, where did Paul and Silas go first? Read Acts 15:41. Why don't we know anything about the churches in Syria and Cilicia? Had Paul raised those churches earlier while he was living in Tarsus? Or, had those churches been started by believers who had been at that first Pentecost? Of course, we have no idea.
3. Read Acts 16:1-13. These words might be a shock to some after what happened at the conference recorded in Acts 15. Paul had the letter in hand saying that it was not necessary to follow all the Jewish requirements; yet, one of the first things he did was to circumcise Timothy at Lystra—where Paul had been stoned and left for dead. How do you feel about the experience of Timothy? Would you be willing to do what Timothy did? What kind of experiences today might be the equivalent of what Timothy did?
4. Do we have any responsibility for the conscience of another person? Are we responsible in any way for what s/he thinks? Why should I allow someone else's scruples, especially if they are misguided, to control my behavior? See 1 Corinthians 8:4,8; Romans 14; and 1 Corinthians 10.

**1 Corinthians 10:27-11:1:** <sup>27</sup> If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you decide to go, eat what is set before you, without asking any questions because of your conscience. <sup>28</sup> But if someone says to you, "This food was offered to idols," then do not eat that food, for the sake of the one who told you and for conscience' sake- <sup>29</sup> that is, not your own conscience, but the other person's conscience.

"Well, then," someone asks, "why should my freedom to act be limited by another person's conscience? <sup>30</sup> If I thank God for my food, why should anyone criticize me about food for which I give thanks?"

<sup>31</sup> Well, whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, do it all for God's glory. <sup>32</sup> Live in such a way as to cause no trouble either to Jews or Gentiles or to the church of God. <sup>33</sup> Just do as I do; I try to please everyone in all that I do, not thinking of my own good, but of the good of all, so that they might be saved.

<sup>11:1</sup> Imitate me, then, just as I imitate Christ.—American Bible Society. (1992). *The Holy Bible: The Good News Translation\** (2nd ed., 1 Corinthians 10:27–11:1). New York: American Bible Society.

5. In effect, Paul said: "I risk my life every day to bring the gospel to these people. Why would I do anything from self-centered motives to turn them away from Christianity or Christ?" Are we willing to set aside some of our personal desires or even convictions in order not to offend someone else? Of course, this does not include compromising true biblical standards. Paul had some things to say about that as well. See **Galatians 1:8-9**.
6. Timothy's father was a Gentile, a Greek. But, his mother was a Jewish Christian by the name of Eunice. She and her mother Lois had carefully taught Timothy from the Scriptures, starting

in his childhood. We do not know exactly why Paul was so attracted to Timothy; but, Timothy turned out to be the “son” Paul apparently never had himself. And Timothy was respected by all the local believers.

7. Remember, that according to beliefs about Jewish identity, heritage is passed through the mother’s line rather than the father’s; thus, technically making Timothy a Jew. And why does Jewish identify follow the mother’s line instead of the father’s? Because one cannot always be sure who the father is; but, it is clear who the mother is! Timothy was probably not circumcised at birth because his father thought it was not necessary, maybe even barbaric. Paul, realizing that Timothy would be working with him among Jews, decided that in order to prevent any unnecessary conflicts later, Timothy must be circumcised. Timothy was a Jew.
8. Would you be willing to be circumcised in order to spread the gospel to Jews, many of whom would reject what you had to say anyway?
9. Circumcision was so important to some Jews that to worship with someone who was not circumcised could spoil their whole day! So, how would you like to be on the committee to determine whether someone was circumcised or not?

**Galatians 2:1-5:** <sup>1</sup>Fourteen years later I went back to Jerusalem with Barnabas, taking Titus along with me. <sup>2</sup>I went because God revealed to me that I should go. In a private meeting with the leaders I explained the gospel message that I preach to the Gentiles. I did not want my work in the past or in the present to be a failure. <sup>3</sup>**My companion Titus, even though he is Greek, was not forced to be circumcised,** <sup>4</sup>**although some wanted it done. Pretending to be fellow-believers, these men slipped into our group as spies, in order to find out about the freedom we have through our union with Christ Jesus.** They wanted to make slaves of us, <sup>5</sup>but in order to keep the truth of the gospel safe for you, we did not give in to them for a minute.—*Good News Bible\** (Galatians 2:1–5). [Bold type is added.]

Was that the meeting described in Acts 15?

10. After having circumcised Timothy, they visited churches that Paul had started in that area. But, when they tried to travel south and west into the area of Asia Minor, including Ephesus, the Holy Spirit prevented them from doing so. (See Acts 16:6.) How did the Holy Spirit do that? They tried to go north into Bithynia; but, in some undisclosed way, the Spirit prevented them from going there as well. So, they traveled westward to the seaport of Troas. Did Paul receive daily guidance from the Holy Spirit as Jesus apparently did? Did Paul receive a vision from God? Remember that Paul later spent three years in that very area! Why would God “prevent” him from going there at this point?
11. What we know is that in a night vision, they were called to go across the Aegean Sea to Macedonia or Greece. And so, Paul and his traveling companions, which then included Luke, set about on that journey almost immediately. They were leaving Asia and going to Europe.
12. The first city they visited in Macedonia was Philippi. Read Acts 16:11-24. The Jewish requirements were that if there were at least ten Jewish families in a town or city, they were expected to establish a synagogue. Apparently, there were either very few Jews or no Jews at all in Philippi. How would one go about finding out if there was a Jewish synagogue in a certain city? Would the citizens be generally aware of its presence? As we know from numerous passages describing when Paul arrived in a new city, he went first to the local synagogue. (Acts 13:14,42,44; **17:1-2**; 18:4) What is particularly significant is that although they did not find a synagogue, they still went on Sabbath to the riverside to pray and keep the Sabbath. There they found some women, probably Jewish and Gentile worshipers of God; and Paul and his

associates worshiped with them. This is proof of the fact that Paul kept the Sabbath even when there was no synagogue available.

13. Read Acts 16:25-34. This incredible story teaches us several things. Could it really be true that faith is the only requirement for salvation? (Acts 16:31) Did this Roman jailer have any background in the Jewish religion? Or, Christianity? How many different details of the Jewish or Christian religion did they have an opportunity to discuss with the jailer and his family before being baptized? Imagine being one of the jailer's family members. You would have been awakened in the middle of the night and told to welcome some wounded ex-prisoners into your home and accept what they said about God. How would you respond to that?
14. It is important to recognize that Philippi was a Roman outpost, controlled by a group of former Roman soldiers. Legally, it was thought of as being a part of Rome itself; and thus, it was administered as if it were.
15. Would you agree with Paul's statement in Acts 16:31 that faith is the only requirement for salvation? (Compare Romans 3:28 and Galatians 2:16.) What is implied by *having faith*?

Faith is [just] a word we use to denote a relationship with God as with a Person well known. The better we know Him, the better the relationship may be.

Faith implies an attitude toward God of love, trust, and deep admiration. It means having enough confidence in Him, based on the more than adequate evidence revealed, to be willing to believe whatever He says [as soon as we are sure He is the One saying it], to accept whatever He offers [as soon as we are sure He is the One offering it], and to do whatever He wishes [as soon as we are sure He is the One wishing it]—without reservation—for the rest of eternity.

Anyone who has such faith is perfectly safe to save. This is why faith is the only requirement for heaven.

[Faith also means that, like Abraham, Job, and Moses, God's friends, we know God well enough to reverently ask Him, "Why?"]—A. Graham Maxwell, *You Can Trust the Bible* 81. [Content in brackets is added based on Dr. Maxwell's lectures.]

16. Sometimes, you might hear a pastor trying to make a big deal about the difference between *faith* and *belief*. But, in actual fact, they are the same word in Greek. See James 2:19. That verse could be translated: "The devils have faith; but, it doesn't change them!" So, the issue is: What impact does faith have in your life?
17. Do you think the jailer had possibly heard some of Paul's messages earlier in the city of Philippi? Did they actually have adequate preparation for baptism? "There is need of a more thorough preparation on the part of candidates for baptism.... The principles of the Christian life should be made plain to those who have newly come to the truth."—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*,\* vol. 6, 91.4-92.0. Do you think the jailer and his family became leaders in the church at Philippi?
18. Read Acts 16:35-40. Why did Paul and Silas demand that the Roman officials come and personally escort them "out of prison"? Was Paul just trying to show off his Roman citizenship? Or, was he trying to protect the church members left in Philippi as much as possible from future problems? Was Paul making sure that the citizens understood that he was not an outlaw? We need to know that being a Roman citizen was highly prized by the people of Philippi. How do you think Paul and Silas proved their Roman citizenship?
19. Read Acts 17:1-9. Apparently, Paul and Silas only managed to teach in Thessalonica for a few weeks. But, they were able to raise a small congregation there among whom were some leading

women and a large group of Greek men who worshiped God. Once again, traditional Jews were jealous and gathered a group of worthless loafers from the streets, formed a mob, and caused trouble. This passage is proof of the fact that Christianity was still an unrecognized and, thus, illegal religion.

20. Try to understand the position of those Jewish believers who opposed Paul. How would you react if a new preacher suddenly showed up at your church and after a few weeks convinced half of your church members to leave and join a new religion?
21. Read Acts 17:10-15. What a change in response! Surely, Paul and Silas must have been excited to find a city where the people not only seriously listened to what they had to say but also researched it for themselves to see if it was true. Where did those citizens of Berea find access to the Jewish Scriptures? Copies of books of the Bible were very expensive, having been handwritten on very expensive material and long scrolls and, thus, were usually kept only in synagogues. In any case the Jews of Berea were apparently willing to share their Scriptures and their time with Paul and Silas. But, it was not long before their ministry was interrupted by antagonistic forces from Thessalonica.
22. How do we respond when some new idea about the Bible or about Christianity is brought to us? Do we go home each Sabbath and carefully study to see if what the pastor said in church was true? Should we? Or, should we just assume that because that person is a pastor and is employed by the church that whatever s/he preaches must be true?
23. Read Acts 17:15-22. Arriving in Athens, Paul changed his approach to spreading the gospel. He not only spoke in the Jewish synagogue or synagogues there, but also he daily spoke with people in the marketplace. This attracted the attention of some of the leading citizens of the city, and Paul was invited to make that famous speech at the Areopagus which is sometimes called Mars Hill. Paul needed to take a different approach to speaking to those people who had no background in the Jewish Scriptures.
24. Read Acts 17:22-31. Why did the Athenians have an idol addressed to an “unknown god”?  

*Diogenes Laertius* (l. 110), an early 3d century writer, tells how Epimenides of Crete was invited to help Athens in the time of great pestilence. The Cretan took some black and some white sheep to the Areopagus and turned them loose to wander through the city. Wherever one of the sheep lay down, a sacrifice was offered, and an altar was erected on the spot. The memorials of this atonement bore no name.—Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1980). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*,\* vol. 6, 351. Review and Herald Publishing Association.
25. It would have been very interesting to see and hear Paul’s speech and see what the reaction was at the Areopagus. Much of what he said must have seemed strange to his audience. But, he got a rather unusual response when he talked about God being the judge of the world and people rising from the dead. This was completely contrary to the beliefs of most of his Athenian audience. They believed that God was “(1) utterly transcendent, having no dealings whatsoever with the world or concerning human affairs, and (2) that when a person dies there can be no resurrection at all.”—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* for Wednesday, August 29. Later, these beliefs were called deism.
26. Yet, there were some very important people including Dionysius and Damaris who apparently accepted Paul’s teachings. How much difference should we allow in the ways people use to spread the gospel? See 1 Corinthians 2:2.
27. Paul felt it was necessary to move to Corinth fairly quickly. There he met Aquila and Priscilla who ended up being lifelong friends. They not only shared his Christianity but also had the same trade; so, they ended up working together, making tents. (Romans 16:3; 2 Timothy 4:19)

28. So, how was Paul received in Corinth? See Acts 18:4-17? This experience with Gallio is important in our dating the activities of Paul. We know exactly when Gallio was governor of Corinth; and, thus, we can establish the time when Paul was there.

12. *Gallio*. His full name originally was Marcus Annaeus Novatus, but upon being adopted by a wealthy Roman named Lucius Junius Gallio, he was thereafter known as Junius Annaeus Gallio. He was the brother of the Stoic philosopher Seneca, the tutor of Nero. Seneca dedicated to his brother, the proconsul, two treatises, on "Anger" and the "Blessed Life." Gallio was probably proconsul of Achaia sometime between A.D. 51 and 53 (see p. 98). After he retired from Achaia in consequence of an attack of fever (*Seneca Epistles* civ. 1), he returned to Rome. At first he enjoyed the favor of Nero, but eventually fell under the tyrant's displeasure and, according to one tradition, was executed by him. Another tradition represents him as anticipating his fate by suicide. Tacitus, however, speaks of him only as "dismayed by the death of his brother Seneca" and pleading with Nero for his life (*Annals* xv. 73; Loeb ed., *Tacitus*, vol. 4, p. 333).—Nichol, F. D. (Ed.). (1980). *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*,\* vol. 6, 363. Review and Herald Publishing Association.

29. When Silas, Timothy, and Luke joined Paul in Corinth, they brought monetary contributions from the churches in Macedonia. (2 Corinthians 11:8-9) This allowed Paul to spend all his time at his own expense spreading the gospel. (1 Corinthians 9:14) Soon, Paul was forced out of the synagogue in Corinth and moved to the home of Titius Justus, a Gentile who lived next door to the synagogue.
30. After one and one-half years in Corinth while on his way back to his home church at Antioch in Syria, Paul took Aquila and Priscilla. In a stop at Ephesus, they had an opportunity to meet with some Christians there who begged him to stay. Instead of personally staying, he left Aquila and Priscilla in Ephesus to build up the church, and he promised that he himself would return. (Acts 18:18-21) We know, in fact, that later, he spent about three years in Ephesus.

Those who today teach unpopular truths need not be discouraged if at times they meet with no more favorable reception, even from those who claim to be Christians, than did Paul and his fellow workers from the people among whom they labored. The messengers of the cross must arm themselves with watchfulness and prayer, and move forward with faith and courage, working always in the name of Jesus.—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*\* 230.2.

**If, in the closing scenes of this earth's history, those to whom testing truths are proclaimed would follow the example of the Bereans, searching the Scriptures daily, and comparing with God's word the messages brought them, there would today be a large number loyal to the precepts of God's law, where now there are comparatively few....**

All will be judged according to the light that has been given. The Lord sends forth His ambassadors with a message of salvation, and those who hear He will hold responsible for the way in which they treat the words of His servants. Those who are sincerely seeking for truth will make a careful investigation, in the light of God's word, of the doctrines presented to them.—*Ibid.*\* 232.2. [Bold type is added.]

31. Read Acts 17:32-34. Notice that there were three distinctly different responses to Paul's message in Athens.

(1) Some mocked. They were amused by the passionate earnestness of this strange Jew. It is possible to make a jest of life; but those who do so will find that what began as comedy must end in tragedy. (2) Some put off their decision. The

most dangerous of all days is when a man discovers how easy it is to talk about tomorrow. (3) Some believed. The wise man knows that only the fool will reject God's offer.—William Barclay, *The Acts of the Apostles*,\* rev. ed. (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), 133.

32. It is interesting to notice that Paul actually quoted a pagan writer (Acts 17:28) in his speech. Was that a mistake? From time to time, are we allowed to quote from non-biblical sources in making our points.
33. It is clear that Paul and his companions were guided in their missionary activities by various visions and directions from God. Should we hesitate to move out into missionary activities without that kind of guidance? What do we have that Paul did not have available to him? We have the entire Scriptures including the New Testament with all the writings of Paul himself, and we also have the writings of Ellen White. Do we need more than that?
34. How do you think you personally should respond to what you have learned in this lesson? What factors keep you from sharing your faith right now? Is there any reason why you could not get together with another church member or friend and begin sharing the gospel? Remember that those who share the gospel are coworkers with God. Wouldn't that be nice?
35. There are several important lessons we need to learn from Paul's second missionary journey. He continued to visit churches even in places where he had previously been stoned and left for dead! He also was willing to adapt his message to diverse audiences.
36. How would you feel about being a companion of Paul as he experienced things like exorcisms, quiet witnessing at a riverside, beatings, conversions, rejections, public evangelism, jail time, chaotic mob attacks, etc.? Sometimes, we almost subconsciously seem to think that if God is on our side, we will not face any of those challenging situations. So, why do you think God allowed Paul to suffer, be beaten, be shipwrecked, etc.?
37. Early in his experience in Corinth, Paul was tempted to think that very pagan and very corrupt city was not worth his efforts; he wanted to move on. However, in a vision, God told him: "I am with you, and I have many people in this city." (See Acts 18:10.) So, Paul continued to work there for one and one-half years.

But what can one expect in a "with God" life? Does such partnership convey special protection, divine leading, or inner peace? Perhaps all three, but note Paul's summary of what his "with God" ministry included: five whippings, each including 40 lashes minus one; or put another way, 200 lashes minus five, totaling one [sic] 195 lashes; three beatings with rods; one stoning; three shipwrecks, including a night and day adrift at sea; multiple dangers; sleeplessness; hunger; thirst; cold and nakedness (2 Cor. 11:24-27) . . . and eventually martyrdom.—*Adult Teachers Sabbath School Bible Study Guide*\* 122.

38. Don't we believe that God was with Paul? In the times of trouble that are ahead of us, should we allow ourselves to have doubts about God's presence if we suffer in one way or another? In Philippi, Paul and Silas were beaten and thrown into prison. The result was that the Roman soldiers who were leaders in the city of Philippi were forced to respect the religion of Paul and Silas even though it was considered to be illegal.
39. Suffering is a complex issue which requires a lot of careful thought. Are you prepared to suffer for God's sake? Have you had any experience like that in the past where you have been mistreated because of your Christian beliefs?

© 2018, Kenneth Hart, MD, MA, MPH. Permission is hereby granted for any noncommercial use of these materials. Free distribution of all or of a portion of this material such as to a Bible study class is encouraged.

\*Electronic version.

[Info@theox.org](mailto:Info@theox.org)

Last Modified: July 27, 2018

Z:\My Documents\WP\SSTG-Hart\Acts\SS-9-Acts-2018\_09\_01-Fin+.wpd