

## THE BOOK OF ACTS | GOD'S REVELATION OF TRANSITION

### SESSION 51 | ACTS 15:35-16:13

#### ACTS 15:35-41 | PROPOSAL FOR A SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

Note: vv. 35-41 also included on session 50

- Verses 35-36 –
  - Paul proposes the trip, after what appears to be a good ministry in Antioch. This is approximately 53AD.
  - The proposal is for Paul and Barnabas to go to the cities where they had previously seen converts and to **see how they do**.
- Verses 37-41 –
  - Sometimes two determined men can hit a roadblock, and that is what happened here. the *sharp contention* caused the team to separate.
  - Sometimes our Christian world is overly fearful of contention.
    - Should Paul and Barnabas have made some compromise?
    - Should they have had a Christian mediation team come to solve the matter?
    - Should they have cancelled the trip because there was not perfect harmony?
    - These are approaches we want to take today. However, it may be more advantageous to say, “You and I don’t see eye to eye, so why don’t we just do our work separately?”
  - After this, we have no further word of Barnabas (and should avoid “conclusions from silence”). However, we do know that Paul and Mark worked together later, and we know that Paul and Silas had a successful ministry as well.
  - The team of Barnabas and Mark went to Cyprus while Paul and Silas went through Syria and Cilicia, doing a *church-strengthening* work.
  - Remember that, at this point, no “gentile churches” had been established, as far as we know.
    - There were Jews and Gentiles, both believing, and both serving the Lord together, though under different programs.
    - This is why we see books like Ephesians and 1st and 2nd Corinthians have a mixture of kingdom messages and grace messages.
    - This is also why it was important for Paul to have a companion from Peter’s flock.

#### ACTS 16:1-10 | THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY: ASIA MINOR

- Verses 1-2 –
  - Derbe was the last place Paul visited on his previous journey.
    - Coming from Antioch, Derbe would have been the first city at which Paul and Silas arrived.
    - Lystra was beyond Derbe, about 50 miles.
    - In Derbe, Paul had preached the saving gospel (Acts 14:20-21) and **had taught many** (Acts 14:21). It is likely that Timothy was one of these that he (along with Barnabas) had taught.
  - Timothy was considered Jewish by the Jews, yet had been raised as a gentile.
    - It was **well reported** in the region that this uncircumcised Jew was a “rising star” in the assembly.
    - It appears (from context) that the assemblies would have been fine with an uncircumcised gentile, but Timothy was not that, and this caused the very problems that the intentions of the Jerusalem assembly were trying to avoid.
  - Note: the KJV uses **Timotheus** in some places and *Timothy* at other times. I have not yet discovered the pattern. In 1611 the English language was much more open to spelling variations than our current culture. The original version of the KJV, for example, spelled *kingdom* two different ways in two back-to-back verses (Mark 10:23-24).

- Verse 3 –
  - Timothy was Paul’s **own son in the faith** (1 Tim. 1:2) and was well-versed in Scripture (2 Tim. 1:5). This made him the perfect partner in ministry. Paul knew, however, that his ministry would be **to the Jew first** (Rom. 1:16), and that Timothy’s uncircumcision would be a hindrance.
  - Paul would fight “tooth and nail” to keep circumcision from becoming part of the “Gospel,” but he would go to any lengths to avoid he or anyone around him being a Gospel hindrance.
- Verse 4-5 –
  - The assemblies had a Jewish base and a gentile mix at this point. They would be confused by the new dispensation, wondering how the two could be compatible.
  - Paul and Silas (along with Timothy) **delivered them the decrees** from Jerusalem. The word **ordained** is the word for *making a judgment*. The decisions at Jerusalem relieved the tension between the two gospels (Gal. 2:7) and allowed a time of growth.
- Verses 6-10 –
  - Both Phrygia and Galatia are regions, as was Asia. In modern geography, everything that has taken place thus far in Acts is in Asia.
  - For reasons unknown and in a manner unknown, they **were forbidden of the Holy Ghost** to preach anymore in the modern Asia-minor region. But, while forbidden to speak the Gospel in one area, Paul received a vision we now refer to as the *Macedonian Call* which begged them to **Come over into Macedonia, and help us**. While there was a long-standing Jewish presence in Macedonia, there had not been opportunity for the Gospel to the uncircumcision to be preached.
  - Since Macedonia is in Europe, this became the first venture of Christianity in the Western world.

## ACTS 16:11-15 | THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY: LYDIA’S CONVERSION IN PHILIPPI

- Verses 11-12 –
  - They first came to Samothracia, an island in the Aegean Sea, then arrived in Europe at Neapolis, the port city, which is about 10 miles from Philippi, the most populated city of the region.
  - The city is named after Philip of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great. Impressive ruins of the city remain today.
  - Note that Philippi was not only the **chief city** but also noted as a **colony**.
    - A κολωνία [kolonia] was a Roman military outpost.
    - The name survived in English usage and was originally used of settlements of soldiers. The name *Lincoln* is an abbreviation of *Lindum Colonia* in England, which was originally a colony of Roman veterans.
- Verse 13 –
  - This verse, first of all, displays that the “church” was still Jewish in its orientation (i.e.: no split had occurred between synagogue and “church”).
  - Second, however, this verse *might* give us a clue as to the time of year. The Greek phrase translated **on the sabbath** is not typical. Literally, it says, “on the day of the Sabbaths.” A few things of note:
    - Sabbaths is plural, though translated into the singular in KJV and (I believe) all other major translations.
    - This phrase (or very similar) is used in the plural in John 20:1, as well as Lk. 24:1 and Mark 16:2, referring to the day Jesus was raised from the dead.
    - Resurrection day was on the first of seven sabbaths counted from Passover to Pentecost.
    - It is likely that Paul is saying, “On the first Sabbath of the *Feast of Weeks...*” If this assumption is correct, then this took place in March / April.
    - From this we can also assume the following:
      - The women gathered were Jewish, or at least God-fearing gentiles.
      - There were not enough men in the town to have a synagogue (a minimum of 10 men was required, this was called a *minion*). Had there been a synagogue, the women would likely have gathered there.