

New Way RECHARGE Bible Study

The Second Preaching Trip - Acts 16 and 17

Lesson 10

Introduction:

Acts 14 ended as Paul and Barnabas completed their first preaching trip. After the controversy over circumcision, Paul began his second trip with Silas as his companion (15:40,41).

I. The Journey Begins - >>> Please read Acts 16:1-12. <<<

1 Whom did Paul and Silas find to accompany them on the preaching trip? (a) Peter, (b) Mark, (c) Timothy, (d) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

2 What did Paul have done to this man because of the Jews? Answer: Paul had him _____ because of the Jews.

3 What did Paul see in a vision at Troas? Answer: He saw a man from _____ asking them to come there.

4 Where did the group then go to preach? (a) Babylon, (b) Persia, (c) America, (d) Philippi. Answer: _____.

Comments: Paul and Silas first revisited the churches begun on the first journey. At Lystra they found a young man named Timothy, whom Paul wanted to accompany them. Timothy's mother was a Jewish Christian, but his father was a Greek.

Paul knew that circumcision does not matter one way or the other (Gal. 5:6). In Acts 15 he had refused to have Titus circumcised (Gal. 2:1-5), because some were claiming circumcision was essential to salvation (Acts 15:1). However, he did not oppose circumcision as a health measure or even as a sign of nationality. He had Timothy circumcised as a matter of influence, not as a requirement of salvation (cf. 1 Cor. 9:19-23). Jews would not associate with Gentiles (Acts 10:28), so without circumcision Timothy's opportunity to teach Jews would have been limited.

Guided by the Spirit, they passed several areas till they came to Troas (see a map). There a vision convinced them to preach in Macedonia. They took ship and traveled to Philippi (see map). The use of "we" in 16:10 implies that the author (Luke) had joined the party. Note the use of "we" or "they" from here on throughout the book.

II. Preaching in Philippi - Acts 16:13-40

The Conversion of Lydia

>>> Please read Acts 16:13-15. <<<

5 In Philippi, where did Paul find people to teach? Answer: They met with women at a place of prayer by a _____.

6 Who was converted? (a) Lydia, (b) Dorcas, (c) Mary, (d) Eve. Answer: _____.

Comments: Paul usually began preaching at the Jewish synagogue. Evidently Philippi had no synagogue, so he taught some women who met for prayer by a riverside. Lydia and her household were baptized, then she urged Paul's company to stay in her home. Evidently she was a woman of some means, as well as very devout and very hospitable.

Advocates of infant baptism often claim that "household conversions" in Acts justify the baptism of babies. But remember that people who are baptized must first understand the gospel, believe it, repent of sins, and confess Christ, none of which babies can do (see John 6:44,45; Mark 16:15,16; Acts 8:12; 2:38; Romans 10:9,10). Furthermore, little children do not need baptism, since they have no sins to be forgiven (Matthew 18:3; 19:14; Psalm 106:38; Ezekiel 18:20; 2 Corinthians 5:10).

As with all household conversions, Lydia's case nowhere states that babies were baptized. Many households include no children, let alone little children. In fact, Lydia was probably unmarried. No husband is mentioned. Only women were present at the place of prayer (v13). A man is the head of his household (Eph. 5:22-24), so he is always mentioned if he is involved. The ?household? could have involved relatives, servants, or other people just living there like the preachers later did. Such an absence of evidence cannot be used to disprove the clear evidence stated elsewhere that babies do not meet the prerequisites of baptism.

Once again we summarize the example of conversion:

The Conversion of Lydia's Household - Acts 16:13-15

Hearing	Belief	Repentance	Confession	Baptism	Result
v 13,14				v15	

(Note: If you would like to learn more about infant baptism according to the Scriptures, please see the links at the end of this lesson.)

Paul and Silas Imprisoned>>> Please read Acts 16:16-24. <<<

7 What miracle did Paul perform on a servant girl? Answer: Paul cast out of her a _____.

8 Who was upset by this? Answer: This upset the girl's _____ who made money off her.

9 What accusations were made against Paul and Silas? Answer: They were accused of teaching customs that were not _____.

10 What was done to them as a result? (a) nothing, (b) beating and imprisonment, (c) stoning, (d) they were set free. Answer: _____.

Comments: Paul cast the demon out of a girl who had a spirit of divination. Divination is a form of witchcraft (note Deut. 18:9-14). As in the previous cases of Simon (Acts 8) and Elymas (Acts 13), this story confirms that the Occult is from Satan, and that true miracles are superior to witchcraft.

When Paul cast the demon out, the girl's masters lost their source of income. They retaliated by making false accusations. As a result, Paul and Silas were beaten with rods and imprisoned, where the jailer put them in stocks in the innermost prison.

Note that, for perhaps the first time in Acts, Christians were here severely persecuted by someone other than the Jews.

Conversion of the Jailer>>> Please read Acts 16:25-34. <<<

11 What happened that freed Paul and Silas? Answer: Paul and Silas were set free by an _____.

12 What was the jailer about to do as a result? Answer: The jailer was about to _____.

13 What did he do instead, when he realized no one had escaped? Answer: He asked what he must do to be _____.

14 How was the man saved? (a) he was told to believe, (b) he was taught the whole gospel, (c) he was baptized, (d) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

Comments: At midnight, as Paul and Silas prayed and sang hymns, an earthquake opened their doors and loosed their chains. Since death was the penalty for losing a prisoner (Acts 12:19), the jailer was about to commit suicide. However, Paul called out that they had not left. The man had evidently heard something about the gospel and, realizing that his life had been spared, he asked Paul and Silas what he needed to do to be saved. This is perhaps the greatest question anyone can ever ask.

Note what happened as a result: (1) The jailer was told to believe in Jesus. (2) Then he and his family were taught the whole word of the Lord. (3) They were then baptized and had great joy as a result.

Some people argue that believing (v31) was all the man needed to do to be saved. However, this was just the introduction to the sermon! Paul and Silas still had to teach the word of the Lord to the man (v32). When the man knew the whole truth, he understood the urgency of baptism. He was immediately

baptized, despite the fact the whole event began at midnight! Only after he was baptized did he rejoice, and the record says that then his faith was complete (v34). (Compare James 2:14-26.)

No passage anywhere in Acts shows sinners becoming saved without or before baptism. But many passages show the necessity of obedience, especially baptism, in salvation. See Matt. 7:21-27; Acts 10:34,35; 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 2:6-10; 6:3,4,17,18; Hebrews 5:9; 1 Peter 1:22,23; 3:21.

A summary of this example of conversion:

The Conversion of the Jailer's Household - Acts 16:25-34

Hearing	Belief	Repentance	Confession	Baptism	Result
vv 31,32	vv 31,34			v33	Rejoiced (v34)

(Note: If you would like to learn more about salvation by "faith only" and the importance of obedience, please see the links at the end of this lesson.)

Paul and Silas Released>>> Please read Acts 16:35-40. <<<

15 What did the local magistrates decide to do the next day? Answer: The magistrates said to _____ the prisoners.

16 What did Paul insist must be done first? Answer: Paul said the magistrates should personally come and release them, because they were _____ citizens.

Comments: A Roman citizen could not be beaten before he had been convicted in a trial. So when the magistrates of Philippi decided the next day to let Paul and Silas go, Paul insisted that his rights as a Roman had been violated. He and Silas left only after the magistrates had personally released them. Perhaps Paul wanted public evidence that he was innocent. In any case, Christians never used physical violence to avoid persecution, but they did use their civil rights for protection.

III. Preaching in Thessalonica - >>> Please read Acts 17:1-9. <<<

17 How did Paul persuade Jews to believe in Jesus? (a) human tradition, (b) family religion, (c) reasoning from Scripture, (d) educators. Answer: _____.

18 How did Jews describe the effect the gospel had (v6)? Answer: They said they turned upside down or troubled the _____.

19 In what way did they claim Christians violated Caesar's law? Answer: They said Christians served a different _____.

Comments: Paul's company went next to Thessalonica (see map). Again in the synagogues they used prophecy to persuade Jews that Jesus is Christ and that He had to suffer and be raised from the dead.

Notice again how Christians drew people to Jesus and His church. They did not appeal to human wisdom or tradition, philosophy, family religion, majority rule, or man-made creeds. They did not offer carnivals, parties, entertainment, recreation, banquets or other carnal appeals (2 Cor. 10:3-5). They rested their case entirely on God's revealed will.

Note further that they "reasoned" from Scripture, explaining and demonstrating that Jesus is Christ. This conclusion is not directly stated in any Old Testament passage, but it necessarily followed from what was stated. This is sometimes called appealing to "necessary inference": drawing a conclusion that is not directly stated but which necessarily follows from what is stated. This is here called "reasoning from Scripture" and is shown to be a valid, binding way to determine God's will.

As usual, some people believed the gospel message, but others rejected it. And as before, unbelieving Jews caused a riot. They arrested a man named Jason, whom they accused of harboring Paul's company. They claimed that Christians had turned the world upside down. They knew this would concern the Romans, who despised turmoil in their territories. Adherents of the gospel never started riots or civil revolutions. That was done by enemies of the gospel. Nevertheless, the gospel will make a dramatic change in the personal lives of those who accept it.

Christians were also accused of serving a king who competes with Caesar. The Jews had used this accusation to urge Pilate to kill Jesus. Yet Jesus and Paul had always taught people to obey civil law and pay their taxes (Matt. 22:15-22; Rom. 13:1-7). Jesus explained to Pilate that His kingdom was spiritual in nature, not of this world (John 18:36).

The accusations were false, yet Paul's company again traveled on.

IV. Preaching in Berea - >>> Please read Acts 17:10-15. <<<

20 How did the Bereans compare to the Thessalonians? Answer: They were more _____.

21 How did they determine whether they were being taught truth? Answer: They searched the _____ daily with open minds.

Comments: Paul's company went next to Berea (see map). Here they found fair-minded or noble people, who possessed two characteristics necessary to distinguish truth from error: (1) they had honest hearts to receive the message, and (2) they examined God's word daily to see if what was taught was true. As a result, many of them believed the gospel. People who lack these characteristics will surely be led astray into error.

Note also that these people appealed to the Scriptures as their standard. Contrary to the claims of some, the Scriptures were not so confusing the common people could not understand them. Nor had parts been lost or changed over the centuries since they had been written. Today the New Testament has also been written, and God has also promised to preserve it (1 Peter 1:22-25). So today the

Scriptures are the authoritative, understandable, and complete standard of God's will (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

Despite the honesty of the Bereans, Paul had to leave the city, because Jews from Thessalonica came and stirred up persecution.

V. Preaching in Athens - Acts 17:16-34

A City Given over to Idols

>>> Please read Acts 17:16-23. <<<

22&23 What philosophies did Paul encounter in the Athenian marketplace? Answer: He encountered _____ and _____ (v18).

24 How is the Athenian interest in education described? Answer: They always wanted to hear or tell _____.

25 What did Paul use to introduce his sermon? (a) an altar to an unknown god, (b) a joke, (c) a poem, (d) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

Comments: Paul's next stop was Athens (see map). The city was known for its love of learning and also for its idolatry. Greek mythology illustrates the kind of idolatry that characterized Gentiles in that day. Paul discussed with the Epicureans, who believed the pursuit of pleasure was the meaning of life, and also with Stoics, who at the other extreme sought to avoid both joy and grief.

Given an opportunity to present the gospel, Paul began by telling them about the one God they seemed to know nothing about. Again his sermon illustrates how heathen idol worshipers should be taught.

Paul's Sermon to the Athenians>>> Please read Acts 17:24-29. <<<

26&27 What did these idol worshipers need to know first about God? Answer: God made the _____ and everything in it and is Lord of _____.

28 How do we know God can be found if we seek Him? Answer: God is not far from _____ of us (v27).

29 If we are God's offspring, what can we know? (a) God is not gold or silver, (b) God was not made by man, (c) both the preceding. Answer: _____.

Comments: As he did with the idol worshipers at Lystra (Acts 14), Paul emphasized that God is the Creator of heaven and earth. God is much more than just a man with superhuman powers, as Greek mythology portrayed the gods. We do not have different gods over different areas of the earth and different aspects of life. There is one God who created and rules everything. That God is the source from which all life came, therefore He must be alive. He does not depend on us to provide what He needs; rather we need God to provide for our needs. See also Acts 14:15,17; John 1:1-3; Rom. 1:20; 1 Chron. 29:11,12; James 1:17.

Paul also taught that God is not far from each of us (v27). God is omnipresent and all-knowing. Unlike with heathen deities, we cannot hide from God nor can we fool Him. He knows and sees everything we do (Psalm 139:1-12; John 16:30; Matthew 10:29-31; 6:8,32; 1 Kings 8:39). This also shows that God can be sought and found. He has not isolated Himself from us nor ignored us. We need not despair of knowing His will. We can know His will, for He has revealed it in the Scriptures. See also Matt. 5:6; 7:7-11; 1 Chron. 28:9; Rom. 10:6-17; 2 Tim. 3:16,17.

Finally, if we are the offspring of God (which even Athenians believed), then God must be alive and intelligent. He cannot be simply a statue of gold, silver, or stone. How could dead non-living matter create living, intelligent beings? (Modern evolutionists need to answer this question too!) Nor could God be anything made by the hands of men. God is not part of the creation. He is the Creator (Rom. 1:20-25). These are fundamental facts that distinguish the true God from the gods of ancient or modern idolatry. See also Deut. 4:19; 5:7-9; 2 Kings 21:1-6; 1 Cor. 6:9-11; 10:7,14; 2 Cor. 6:16-18; 1 John 5:21.

The Conclusion of the Sermon>>> Please read Acts 17:30-34. <<<

30 What are all men commanded to do? (a) tithe, (b) repent, (c) observe Christmas and Easter, (d) say the rosary, (e) all the preceding. Answer: _____.

31 What day has God appointed for all men in the world? Answer: God appointed a day in which He will _____ the world.

32 How can we know this event will really occur? Answer: The assurance is that God raised Jesus from the _____.

Comments: Paul concluded by warning that God commands all men to repent. God, who made and controls the universe, has the right to demand obedience. These folks had to repent of their idolatry and begin to serve the true God. Likewise all of us have sins we must repent of. See Luke 13:3,5; 24:47; Acts 2:38; 3:19; 2 Peter 3:9; 2 Cor. 7:10.

Furthermore, God will judge all men according to their lives and will reward or punish them eternally. How can we know this? The proof is that God raised Jesus from the dead. If He can raise Jesus, then He can raise us all. Those, who have been dead for centuries, will still be raised and judged when Jesus returns. Matt. 25:31-46; John 12:48; Rom. 2:4- 11; 14:10-12; 2 Cor. 5:10; Heb. 9:27; Rev. 20:11-15; Ecc. 12:13,14

The doctrine of the resurrection challenged the Athenians. But all people, both then and now, need to learn the lessons Paul taught.