

ACTS 16:4-12

Introduction:

1. We have seen Paul and Barnabas separate over differences about John Mark. Barnabas takes Mark and sails to Cyprus. Paul's new partner is Silas and they go through Syria and Cilicia. Paul adds another partner in Derbe-Lystra by the name of Timotheus. Timothy, out of liberty/love, is **vol**untarily circumcised in order to not be a stumbling block, especially to the unbelieving Jews.
2. As we now see on Paul's **2**nd missionary trip, you will notice he takes his ministry farther and farther away from Jerusalem. This trip will take them through Asia Minor (Turkey) to Greece, and the first converts in Europe, as they move West.
3. **As we can see, the transition is happening, going from the Jewish Kingdom Prophetic Program to the Mystery Body Gospel of Grace Program. But remember, God is **still** working with Israel as she diminishes through the rest of Acts. However, God is no longer working through Israel as the channel to God. Israel is under God's **in**dictment for rejecting God's purpose for her, in unbelief of Messiah and saying **no** to the kingdom offer in Acts 2-7.

A.

Acts 16:4 - And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

1. As they went through the cities to see how the churches were doing, they delivered to them copies of the letters that were written by the Jerusalem Church to the brethren who were among the Gentiles. These were the **off**icial documents sent by the Jerusalem Church (Silas).
2. Remember, the Acts 15 council's decision was that circumcision and the Law were not to be **im**posed upon Gentile believers. Gentiles also were **re**quested to refrain from certain pagan practices, so as not to violate the Jews' conscience (Acts 15:19-21; 21:25).

B.

Acts 16:5 - And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

*Notice how they multiplied. First the believers were established in the faith (**do**ctrine and study of the Word), then they began to reach out! That is not the emphasis most churches do today.

*First Southern

C.

Acts 16:6-8 - Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, Acts 16:7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. Acts 16:8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.

1. These verses are **of**ten used in how God told missionaries and preachers to not go to certain areas or churches. They say: "God told me" or "the Holy Spirit would not let me". I don't know about that.
2. But I do know that **con**text always determines interpretation. What is going on here?
 - a. We do know that, at this time, God did supernatural things with Paul, an apostle. Many things were personally **re**vealed to Paul.

- b. Remember that scripture had not been written yet (Romans-Philemon), so signs and wonders confirmed the **spoken** word.

*Today, since we do **have** the completed Word (Bible), these signs are no longer necessary.

- c. The question should be: **Why** didn't God want Paul's team to go to North Galatia to those places?

Answer: Remember Asia and Bithynia? (verses 6-7)

I Peter 1:1 [Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.]

- (1) Peter is writing to the Little Flock that had been scattered and had, at that time, **ended** up there. As Paul's team started up there, the Holy Spirit stopped him. God was keeping the two programs **separate**. This was to stop them from **mixing** the two programs and causing more confusion and **tension** between them.

- (2) Romans 15:20 - [Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:]

of *Paul did not want to go at this time where the kingdom saints were and interfere with what **God** was doing with them. So Paul would go where there was **no** mention of the name Christ.

**Remember - Galatians 2:9 - [And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.]

The "circumcision" here is the Little Flock and the "heathen" are **any** lost people - Jew or Gentile.

3. I have said "at this time" Paul passes N. Galatia, but we know he **did** go there later to Turkey (Asia Minor).

- a. History tells us of the difficult terrain and hardship placed upon travelers. Evidently, when Paul did go to N. Galatia, his **infirmities** flared up because of the difficulty in going from place to place.

*Record:

Galatians 4:13, 15; 6:11 - [Ye know how through infirmity of the flesh I preached the gospel unto you at the first. Gal. 4:15 Where is then the blessedness ye spake of? for I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me. Gal. 6:11 Ye see how large a letter I have written unto you with mine own hand.]

- b. *Evidently Paul's message (Gal. 2:20; 3:24-26) and his infirmities caused the Galatians to truly **love** Paul. Paul was real, authentic, and they **respected** him.

Galatians 4:14 - And my temptation which was in my flesh ye despised not, nor rejected; but received me as an angel of God, *even* as Christ Jesus.

4. So when God forbade Paul to preach in Asia (Minor), it was only **temporarily**. Evidently many of the scattered Jews (Little Flock) soon returned to Jerusalem (Acts 21:20). Thus Paul did return to Galatia and had a **great** ministry in the once-forbidden areas.

Acts 19:10, 26 - And this continued by the space of two years; so that all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks. Acts 19:26 Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:

Note: Asia again is Asia Minor - Turkey is where Ephesus, Colosse, and Smyrna were located. So they traveled **300** miles to the Roman seaport of Troas. Troas was the ancient Troy.

D.

Acts 16:9-12 - And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. Acts 16:10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them. Acts 16:11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next *day* to Neapolis; Acts 16:12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, *and* a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.

1. Once again Paul is guided by a **supernatural** vision. Paul, the apostle, was led in this way during his **early** ministry, as were others of the Acts signs and wonders period (Acts 5:19-20; 8:26; 9:10-11; 10:3, 10, 17, 19).
2. Paul is going to be moving West, going across Asia, now to Macedonia in Greece. This is where he also will touch some in Europe. This is a **supernatural extension** of the ministry of Paul in a wider area of the Gentiles **farther** away from Jerusalem.
3. This Macedonian call has been **often** used as an **example** of what a missionary call should be. But the Macedonia call is **not** the standard way God guides and leads in the ministry today. In fact, this call is not standard in any day. It is what we call "**special** revelation". It was only used on a few occasions and never was the standard.

*It certainly is not the standard used **today**.

- a. In many places/schools/churches today, when describing one's desire to do the ministry, one almost has to prove he has had a supernatural **encounter** call to the ministry. Most today want a **sign** or some type of feeling to confirm to them that is what God wants them to do.
- b. But today [we walk by faith and not by sight]. God could speak to us through visions. But we believe that **since** He has completed His revelation in the completed Bible, He **no** longer speaks in visions or supernatural manifestations.

*There has been much **harm** to the church by people who have claimed that they have received visions from the Lord, or "God told me". Some have claimed they have been to heaven, or to hell and back, or they have seen Mary.

* God has said all He is going to say in His revealed Word. The Scripture has been **closed**, and
* to say God speaks outside of His Word is called **extra-biblical-revelation!**

- c. However, in the period of transition, God was **still** supernaturally speaking through visions. Paul could **discern** that it wasn't a dream, but that God was speaking to him to go to Macedonia.

II Corinthians 12:1 - It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

- d. If God wants to use one in the ministry, one will know that by **two** ways.

- (1) Through the **revealed** Word of God, His will that is for **today** (Rom.-Philemon).

*God's will has **already** been revealed (Bible). There is no secret will you have to try or beg to find.

Ephesians 1:8-9 - Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence; Eph. 1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

I Timothy 2:4 - Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.

- (2) Make **wise** decisions based upon our **renewed**-matured minds. With God's doctrines for today, with a **desire** to do God's pleasure, we look and see where we might fill the greatest need.

- (3) Ephesians 1:8 - God has abounded toward us all:
[wisdom] - to know **how** to use knowledge properly.
[prudence] - insight to be able to look into a situation right to the heart of it.

*It is being able to lay aside all the emotions and feelings and make a decision based upon the **facts**.

Example: I Thessalonians 3:1-2 - Wherefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone; 1Thess. 3:2 And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

**Myself

4. Here, notice the use of [they] and [we] in vs. 8, and then in vs. 10. Evidently the author of Acts, **Luke** the physician, joins Paul and the team at Troas. This may be traced to Paul's illness. Luke is sent by God to help Paul.

* The fact of needing a physician, as an apostle, also demonstrates again the dispensational **change**

* that was taking place in Acts.

*Notice the comparison:

Acts 5:12-16 - And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch. Acts 5:13 And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them. Acts 5:14 And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.) Acts 5:15 Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid *them* on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. Acts 5:16 There came also a multitude *out* of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.

Now: Romans 8:22-23 - For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. Rom. 8:23 And not only *they*, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

5. Here, Luke accompanies Paul and his team to Macedonia and Philippi. At the end of Paul's life, he gives testimony to Luke's **faith**fulness. He says in II Tim. 4:11 [...only Luke is with me].
6. Here in 16:10, Paul shows us how a sold-out believer **r**esponds when God has commanded him [immediately...go unto Macedonia].
7. In 16:11-12, it says they sailed [with a straight course]. This indicates the winds were **f**avorable, directly at their stern, speeding them to their destination, with no unnecessary zigzagging. Their trip was swift, only taking them **2** days. Later, we will see them cover the same distance and it will take **5** days.
 - a. They arrive at Philippi, named after Alexander the Great. It is a Roman colony and its citizens enjoyed the privileges of Rome itself.
 - b. Paul, with his team, stood for the **f**irst time on European soil, where Paul and the gospel of grace would be used of God in a greater way than **e**ver before.

*Since a lot of us come from European heritage, we should graciously **thank** God for sending Paul there. The gospel eventually spread to England - then to us (Whitfield-Edwards-Wesley).