

Week 8 – Paul’s Second Missionary Journey

Introduction: In the second of Paul’s missionary journeys, we seem him develop a team of co-workers and travel to further territories. As he had done in his previous ministry, he seeks to make disciples in urban centers who will form productive Christian congregations and make new disciples from among the people in their region.

- I. Ministry at Philippi – Acts 16:11-40
 - A. Lydia is Converted. (vv. 11-15)
 - B. Paul and Silas go to jail.
 1. Deliverance to the jail comes after a severe beating as retaliation for a public exorcism. (vv. 16-24)
 2. Deliverance from the jail brings proclamation of the Gospel. (vv. 25-34)
 3. Deliverance from the jail perplexes the magistrates. (vv. 35-40)
- II. Ministry at Thessalonica – Acts 17:1-10
 - A. Mixed results from synagogue preaching (vv. 1-5; 1 Thess. 1)
 - B. Jews become jealous
 1. They react with violence. (v. 5)
 2. They accuse the missionaries of causing political instability. (vv. 6-9)
 - C. Paul and Silas escape (v. 10)
- III. Ministry at Berea – Acts 17:10-14
 - A. These people were nicer and willing to study the Scripture which resulted in many conversions. (vv. 10-12)
 - B. Jews from Thessalonica stirred up trouble and caused Paul to flee. (vv. 13-14)
- IV. Ministry at Athens – Acts 17:15-34
 - A. Distress leads to proclamation. (vv. 16-21)
 1. Paul reasoned with those willing to listen. (vv. 16-17)

2. He attracted the attention of some philosophers.¹ (v. 18)
 3. He is brought to the Aeropagus to explain Christianity. (vv. 19-21)
- B. Paul delivers a contextualized Gospel message. (vv. 22-31)
1. He begins with their points of interest. (vv. 22-23)
 2. He puts their worldview in biblical perspective. (vv. 24-27)
 3. He illustrates using their own poets.² (v. 28)
 4. He proclaims judgment on sin and calls for repentance based on Jesus' resurrection from the dead. (vv. 29-31)
 5. The reception was mixed at best. (vv. 32-34)
- V. Ministry at Corinth – Acts 18:1-17
- A. Paul used his trade skills with Priscilla and Aquila to recover financially. (vv. 1-3)
- B. He brought the Gospel to the Jews, but they rejected him. (vv. 4-6)
- C. Paul found success making disciples among the Gentiles. (vv. 7-11)
1. A growing church was established which included leading Jews³ and many Gentiles. (vv. 7-8)
 2. Jesus encouraged Paul through a vision. (vv. 9-10)

¹ Robert L. Reymond writes in *Paul, Missionary Theologian*, p. 161-162 "The Epicurean school, founded by Epicurus (341-270 B.C.), taught that pleasure, the highest of such being a life of tranquility free from pain, disturbing passions, and superstitious fears, including the fear of death, is the chief end of life. It did not deny the existence of the gods, believing in them as 'blessed and immortal beings'; it simply maintained that the gods took no interest in the affairs of men. Accordingly, it upheld the validity of free will over against fatalism. The Stoic school, founded by the Cypriot Zeno (340-265 B.C.) and taking its name from the 'painted Stoa' (portico) where he taught in Athens, taught a pantheistic religious materialism: all that was real, including God, was material. It aimed at living consistently with nature, its over-arching question being: 'How can the wise man live in harmony with nature?' The life lived in harmony with nature is a life lived rationally, it contended, which life also included accepting one's fate from God which was inevitable anyway. It believed that the virtuous life was the only absolute 'good'. All else, including health, wealth, beauty, even life and death, was termed 'indifferent' because such things made no difference to virtue or happiness. It laid great emphasis on the primacy of man's rational faculty and on individual, self-centered pursuit of 'virtue' which emphasis, though it was marked by great moral earnestness and a high sense of duty, marked it also by great spiritual pride."

² *For in thee we live and move and have our being* comes from a quatrain attributed to Epimendides the Cretan. The phrase *for we are all his offspring* comes from Aratus' *Phainomena*.

³ The experience of Crispus, the converted leader of the synagogue must have been similar to Paul's in many respects. He went from being a leader among Jews to being part of a Gentile oriented ministry.

a) “Don’t be afraid” – By this point Paul probably expected his ministry to be cut short by persecution from the Jews.

b) “I have many people in this city” – Paul could minister with complete confidence because he knew that there would be converts.

3. Paul continued his ministry for about eighteen months. (v. 11)

D. Jews sought to oppose him through political means. (vv. 12-17)

1. They accused him of promoting an illegal religion. (vv. 12-13)

2. The persecutors are persecuted. (vv. 13-17)

VI. Paul returns home – Acts 18:18-22

A. He cut his hair due to a Jewish vow (Nazarite?) at Cenchrea. (v. 18)

B. On the way home he ministered in the synagogue at Ephesus. (vv. 19-21)

1. Priscilla and Aquila remained at Ephesus.

2. Paul promised to return again to proclaim Christ there.

C. Paul arrived again at Antioch. (v. 22)

Conclusion: Paul and his companions have, by this point, successfully made disciples and expanded the kingdom of Christ throughout large portions of the Roman Empire. They have been accused frequently of promoting a *religio illicita* but have been exonerated each time. Paul has proclaimed the gospel in the great centers of commerce of the ancient Western world, promoted the doctrine of salvation by grace alone before Jews, Gentiles, merchants and philosophers. He is willing to work to provide for his needs, but he also has graciously received gifts from the converts at Philippi. He is able to accomplish enormous progress through preaching in a city for a few weeks (Thessalonica) or remaining in a city for a year and a half (Corinth). Some dangers he will face with singing (Philippi) and from some he will flee (Thessalonica). Paul is all about, and only about, proclaiming the gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.