

## **Outline**

1. Division from Barnabus
  1. Barnabus desired to take along John Mark
  2. Paul did not want to go with one who had “departed” and “had not gone with them to the work.”
  3. Barnabus takes John Mark and appears to exactly retrace their steps, starting in Cyprus.
2. Paul takes Silas and travels over land through Syria and Cilicia
  1. Delivering copies of the letter from Jerusalem to the saints (Acts 16:4).
  2. Result of strengthened faith and increase in number
3. Timothy joins them in Lystra
  1. Mother was Jewish, father was Gentile
  2. Paul has him circumcised
4. Macedonian call
  1. Prevented from preaching in Asia and Bithynia
  2. Vision at Troas of a Macedonian man saying “Come over to Macedonia and help us”
5. In Macedonia
  1. Troas to Philippi
    1. Conversion of Lydia
    2. Healing of possessed slave whose owners have them jailed
    3. Conversion of jailer
    4. Departure from prison
  2. Philippi to Thessalonica
    1. Reasoning in the synagogue “as his custom was”
    2. Assault on Jason’s house
  3. Thessalonica to Berea
    1. Initial success
    2. Jews from Thessalonica follow and cause trouble
  4. Paul sent alone from Berea to Athens

## Commentary

The difference of opinion between Paul and Barnabas concerning John Mark causes them to part ways. We have no indication that there was any ill-will here — only that they decided that they could not come to the agreement necessary for them to work together on this project.

Paul is prohibited from preaching in two different places in modern day Turkey. This does not indicate that the people of those places were less valued by God. It is probably indicative of the fact that the existing churches from that part of the world would be allowed to continue to spread the gospel into those new areas. Paul's work would take him into places where an organic spread of the gospel was less likely.

Additionally, we see that there seems to be less Jewish influence in Macedonia. Lydia is found in Philippi at the riverside "where prayer was customarily made" (Acts 16:13). This probably indicates that the number of Jews was so small that a synagogue could not be supported there. While there are sizable enough Jewish communities to support synagogues in both Thessalonica and Berea, the further away from Judea Paul will go, the less opposition from Jews he will find, finally ending up in Rome where he seems to be a curiosity more than anything (Acts 28:21).

Lydia is the first recorded convert in Europe. Some surmise that the name given here is a place name and that she is really Euodia or Syntyche (Phil 4:2) with the other being the wife of the jailer. There does not seem to be any textual support for that proposition other than the coincidence of Thyatira being the chief city of the former kingdom of Lydia.

Take note of the anti-Semitism in the accusation against Paul and Silas in Acts 16:20-21: "These men, being Jews..." and "...for us, being Romans..." This was probably near the time when Claudius Caesar had expelled all of the Jews from Rome (Acts 18:2). There is no mention of Luke or Timothy being similarly treated, which might be explained by them appearing to be Gentiles.



Many have asked why only Paul and Silas were singled out for persecution, with Timothy and Luke left free. Of course, Paul and Silas were the leaders of the missionary party and therefore most open to attack. But we must also remember that Paul and Silas were Jews and probably looked very much like Jews (cf. comments on 14:3 on the tradition of Paul's appearance). Timothy and Luke, however, being respectively half-Jewish and fully Gentile (cf. Col 4:14, where Luke is grouped by Paul with his Gentile friends), probably looked Greek in both their features and their dress and therefore were left alone. Anti-Semitism lay very near the surface throughout the Roman Empire. Here it seems to have taken over not only in laying the charge but also in identifying the defendants. (Longenecker, 9463)

In Thessalonica, we again see the harm that envy can do. Acts 17:5 says "But the Jews were jealous" (ESV) and proceeded to form a mob. The result was the posting of what appears to be a "peace bond" which served to expel Paul and his companions from town. It is possible that this is what Paul has in mind when he tells the Thessalonians that he desired to visit there but was hindered by Satan (1 Thessalonians 2:18).

In Berea, as at Lystra, Paul sees initial success. Luke, in this oft-quoted passage, attributes this to the Bereans' attitude of searching the scripture. But, as in Lystra, those who persecuted Paul in another place (Thessalonica this time) follow him there in order to continue their persecution. This causes the brethren to send Paul on, alone, to Athens in order to protect his life.

### **Thought Questions**

Consider the following thought questions:

1. Why did Paul have Timothy circumcised?

2. How did the Spirit guide Paul's company in their travels?
3. Why would Paul cast the spirit out of the slave girl (Acts 16:18)?
4. What purpose would having the magistrates come and lead Paul and Silas from the prison serve?
5. What is the significance of the prominent Greek women believing (Acts 17:12)?