

ACTS

A Bible Study

Part 2

Chapters 13-28



John West 2020

*THE FIRST MISSIONARY
JOURNEY OF PAUL*

ACTS 13:4-14; 28

- City
- ← Paul's routes
- Via Sebaste



FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY

1. Read 13:1-3 What brought about the first missionary journey? What do we learn about the church at (Syrian) Antioch?
2. Read 13:4-12 How did they decide where to go?
3. What do you think about the way Saul/Paul dealt with Elymas? Would we still have that sort of authority? What were the results?
4. Read 13:13-41 (note John Mark left v13 a bone of contention between Paul and Barnabas later) What is Paul's purpose, as he brings a message to the synagogue in Pisidian Antioch, in retelling Israel's history? What points does he make about Jesus?
5. Why could the law not justify (vv38-39)?
6. Read 13:42-52 Why do you think the Jews were jealous and why do you think that so many of them rejected Jesus? (See also Romans 11:11-12).



Antioch in Pisidia

FIRST MISSIONARY JOURNEY (cont)

1. ICONIUM Read 14:1-6 What was the effect of the opposition on Paul and Barnabas? How did God affirm their message? May we expect God to do the same today?
2. LYSTRA Read 14:8-20 What do you think it means that Paul saw the crippled man had faith to be healed? (v8-10).
3. What is Paul's message to the crowd that wants to worship them?
4. DERBE, LYSTRA, ICONIUM, PISIDIAN ANTIOCH, PAMPHYLIA, PERGA, ATTALIA, SYRIAN ANTIOCH.
Read 14:21-28 Why do Paul and Barnabas return to places where they have suffered persecution?
5. What would be the purpose in appointing elders? (v23) How much organisation does a local church need?
6. When we read Acts, we sometimes get the impression that one event happens straight after another. In vv27-28 we see that Paul stayed in their 'home base' Syrian Antioch, 'a long time,' probably over a year. How do you think they may have used their time there ?



Iconium

THE COUNCIL AT JERUSALEM

1. Read 15:1-5 What is the essence of the case being made by the Pharisees? What conditions and requirements do Christians today add to the message of salvation?
2. Read 15:6-11 What is Peter's argument in reply?
3. If someone asked you, "How do I become a Christian?" What is the essential information you would need to tell them?
4. Read 15:16-18 James quotes Amos 9:11-12. (The last line is Isaiah 45:21) How does this support the case made by Paul, Barnabas and Peter?
5. Read 15:19-21 What four requirements are to be made of the Gentiles? Why do you think those particular things are mentioned?
6. Read 15:22-35 What does v28 teach us about coming to unanimous agreement on matters affecting the church?
7. Read 15:36-40 Paul and Barnabas part company after disagreeing about John Mark. However read 1 Corinthians 9:6, Colossians 4:10 and Philemon 24. What should be our attitude when we disagree?

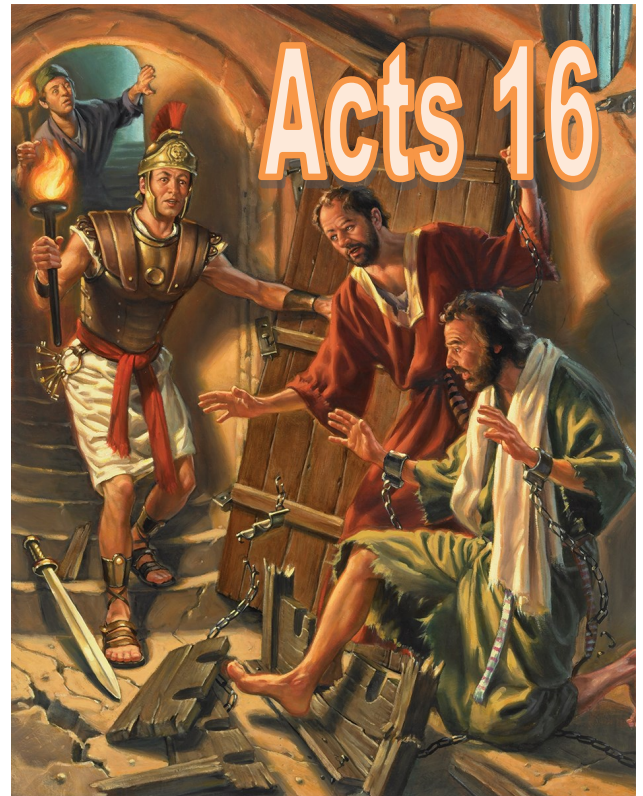


Reading the council's letter



THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY

1. DERBE, LYSTRA. Read 15:40 to 16:6 Timothy becomes a trusted companion of Paul and later receives two letters from him. Since the Jerusalem Council had decided not to burden the Gentiles with circumcision, why does Paul circumcise Timothy? May we learn some principles from this when it comes to communicating the gospel with others?
2. PHRYGIA & GALATIA Read 16:6-10 What may we learn about guidance here?
3. TROAS, SAMOTHRACE, NEAPOLIS, PHILIPPI (in MACEDONIA Read 16:11-15 Paul and Silas sought out places where they could readily share the gospel. Thus, Lydia, a business woman of some influence became a Christian and offered hospitality. Comment on the importance of hospitality in Christian circles and where the best opportunities lie for us to share the gospel with others.
4. Read 16:16-18 Why do you think Paul cast out this spirit and why do you think that he waited so long to do so?
5. Read 16:19-34 What does this passage teach us about our attitude in dire circumstances?
6. What does it mean to “Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ?”
7. Read 16:35-40 Why was it important for Paul to stand up for his rights here? Should we always stand up for our rights?



THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY (cont)

1. AMPHIPOLIS, APOLLONIA, THESSALONICA
Read 17:1-9 What was the content of Paul's message at the synagogue over the three weeks?
2. Note that Paul and Silas had already received 'bad press.' (vv6-7) What should we do in the face of adverse publicity?
3. BEREIA. Read 17:10-15 In what ways did the Bereans display a better attitude than the Thessalonians and why is this important for us too?
4. ATHENS Read 17:16-32 The Areopagus, once a court of council, now met on matters of religion and morals. How does Paul tailor his message to this largely non-Jewish audience? In a society that knows about the Christianity, can you suggest ways in which we could engage people in conversations about our faith? Where would you start?
5. The Resurrection of Jesus was the sticking point for many listeners. Why is it so central to the Christian message and what evidence can we give for it?



Areopagus Hill. Athens

THE SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY (cont)

1. CORINTH Read 18:1-6 Is there a point that you give up on people who won't listen?



Corinth

2. Read 18:7-17 What was the assurance and the result of the vision? Where do you find assurance and strength in your Christian witness? Share the Scriptures and/or events which have given you particular encouragement?
3. CENCHREA, EPHESUS, CAESAREA, ANTIOCH in SYRIA. Read 18:18-22 Vows were sometimes made in thanks for deliverance. Cutting the hair may have followed a temporary Nazirite vow. Do you think observances like that might have any relevance for us today?



THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY

1. GALATIA & PHRYGIA Read 18:23 Paul has visited this area several times to strengthen the converts. Who performs this sort of role today and what is necessary to strengthen people in their faith?
2. An aside in Ephesus, with Pricilla and Aquilla and Apollos. Read 18:24-27 Pricilla may be mentioned first because she was of more prominent standing than Aquilla. At any rate they appear to work together. Comment on the importance of Christians spending time with individual new Christians in training and encouragement (note the result—vv27-28). Who has helped you in this way?
3. EPHESUS. Read 19:1-7 The receiving of the Spirit was evidenced by prophesying and speaking in tongues. Would you expect this to always be the case when someone has hands laid on them after water baptism?
4. Read 19:8-22 What do you understand the message about the “Kingdom of God” to mean? (v8)
5. If you have not already done so, discuss what place miracles and the driving out of spirits might have as part of our witness today. What might be the advantages and dangers?
6. Read 19:23-40 What does Demetrius’ motivation seem to be in starting the riot? Noting v23, how effective are demonstrations? Is there ever a place for Christians to be effectively involved?



Ephesus

THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY (cont)

1. MACEDONIA, TROAS Read 20:1-12 Paul is accompanied by a team of helpers including the author, Luke (v6 “we”). Reading the list you appreciate the way in which the timing of the spread of the gospel coincided with the comparative peace that Roman occupation brought to the Mediterranean world, with the ability to travel across borders unhindered. What other factors may have helped the spread of the gospel?
2. You may wish to comment on the emerging practices of the early church (v7) and the concentration span of the people of those days compared with today. How can we hope to teach people about the faith today, when we seem to be conditioned to develop short attention spans? What helps to keep people involved?
3. MILETUS meeting the Ephesian elders. Read 20:13-38 What can we learn from Paul’s example of dedication (vv18-36)?
4. What dangers did he foresee as he warned the Ephesian elders (vv28-31)? Do these dangers exist today and if so, how may we guard against them?



Miletus

1. TYRE, PTOLEMAIS, CAESAREA Read 21:1-16 Paul is warned and urged “through the Spirit” not to go to Jerusalem. Agabus also warns Paul of what is to come. Why does Paul ignore the warnings (note 20:22-23)? What may we learn here about the function and interpretation of prophecy?



Caesarea

2. JERUSALEM Read 21:17-26 Purification rites could include the expense of sacrifices. They were a voluntary act. What was the purpose of Paul’s involvement? (cf. 16:3, 18:18, and 1 Corinthians 9:20-21). Where is the line when it comes to fitting in with the cultures we seek to reach?

3. Read 21:27-40 In which places around the world are Christians being persecuted today?

Now might be a good time to stop and pray that they may have courage to continue to witness and wisdom in what they do and say.

1. When a Christian, converted from atheism, testifies to atheists, his or her testimony tends to have credibility. When a strict Jew becomes a Christian he or she may have credibility with strict Jews. What does Paul say to establish his credentials? Read 22:1-20



Jerusalem

2. Read 22:22-24 Do you think Paul was wise in mentioning that Jesus had sent him to the Gentiles? What does the pronounced Jewish opposition to Paul's statement reveal about their misunderstanding of God's purposes for the whole world (See Isaiah 49:6 and refer back to Q1 on Acts 11).
3. Read 22:25-30 Again, Paul's Roman citizenship proves useful and will ultimately open up further opportunities to proclaim Jesus as Lord. What opportunities or gifts do you have that enable you to witness? Who are the people you are most likely to witness to?

Now might be a good time to stop and pray for unbelievers known to you. Pray for opportunities to share with them, pray with them and through God's Spirit, see them give their lives to Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord.

1. Read 23:1-10 Why and how does Paul split the Sanhedrin? (See Matthew 10:16-22, Luke 16:1-9 esp v8) Is there a place for shrewdness in Christian work?
2. Read 23:11 Recount a time when God may have prepared you for his future plans. What sense do you have of God's future for you now?
3. Read 23:12-35 and Romans 8:28 The Romans went to great lengths to protect Paul. When have you found God's protection over your life working things together for good?



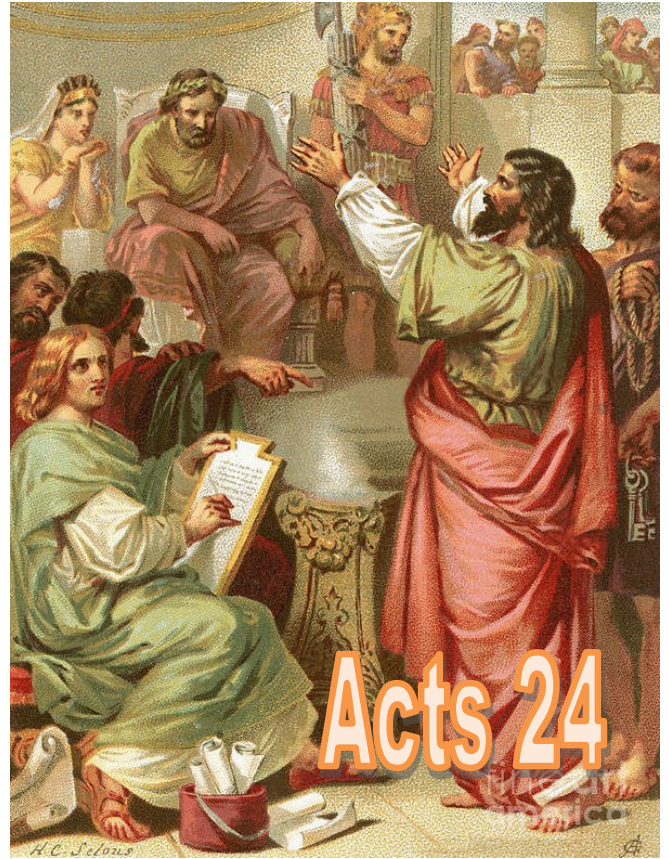
Caesarea

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TRIAL BEFORE GOVERNOR FELIX

1. Read 24:1-9 What are the charges and how accurate are they? (compare 21:28 with 24:5)
2. Read 24:10-21 What points does Paul make in his defence?
3. Read 24:22-27 How does Paul use this opportunity with Felix?
4. What do you think Paul might have said in relation to “righteousness, self-control and the judgement to come” Does this still alarm people today?



TRIAL BEFORE FESTUS & AGRIPPA

(Herod Agrippa II)

1. Read chapter 25. Why does Paul appeal to Caesar?
2. Read chapter 26 What main points does Paul make in his defence before Agrippa? How does he use Agrippa's knowledge of Judaism to make his case? What is Paul trying to achieve in presenting his defence? (vv28-29)
3. What is the effect of the gospel? (vv17-18)
When have you observed this transformation in your own life or that of others?
4. Why does Festus declare Paul insane? (v24)
What do you think he finds so unbelievable?





JOURNEY TO ROME

1. Read 27:1-12. Why should the Centurion have listened to Paul rather than the experts (the pilot and ship-owner)? Does this have any relevance today when Christians are divided in opinion (over, for example, Climate Change)?



2. Read 27:13-26 What gives Paul so much confidence? Share a time when you may have felt confident in the face of adversity.

3. Read 27:27-44 Why is everyone listening to Paul now?

JOURNEY TO ROME (cont)

1. Read 28:1-10. How does Paul use his time profitably on Malta?
2. Read 28:11-15 Castor and Pollux (v11), the two sons of Zeus, were the guardian deities of sailors. Do you have any thoughts why Luke might have made this observation? (cf v15 and chapter 27)



Rome

ARRIVAL IN ROME

3. Read 28:16-22 Why does Paul call the Jewish leaders together?
4. Read 28:23-28 What does Paul say about the gospel to these leaders?
5. Read 28:30-31 Paul's martyrdom is not mentioned. What purpose do you think Luke might have had in leaving his account open-ended?

Reflect back on what has impressed you most about the account of the Acts of Jesus Christ , through the Holy Spirit in the development of the early church. What has inspired you? And is there anything that you are aiming for or doing differently now as a result of reading Acts?