

# 6. Further Expansion: Journeys 2, 3

## I. Second Missionary Journey

AD 50–52. Acts 15:36–18:22

### A. Dissemination of the Jerusalem letter

The sharing of the letter to “the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia” (Acts 15:24) was in 3 stages:

1. Antioch (15:30-35): the Jerusalem church delegated Judas Barsabbas and Silas to accompany Paul and Barnabas back to Antioch to give the personal validation of the Jerusalem church to the letter.
2. Syria and Cilicia (15:36-41): Paul proposed to Barnabas that they visit the churches established on the first trip. Paul objected to Barnabas’s desire to bring his cousin John Mark, so they parted company:
  - a. Barnabas and Mark sailed for Cyprus, Barnabas’ home province. Later tradition: Salamis was Barnabas’s home town, where he was martyred in 71 (5th cent. church over his tomb). He is the patron saint of Cyprus, founder of the Cypriot Orthodox Church (431 granted independence from Antioch).
  - b. Paul took Silas and passed through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.
3. S. Galatia (16:1-5): Paul and Barnabas continued north through the Taurus Mountains via the Cilician Gates (Gülek Pass, 1050 m), onto the Anatolian Plateau, to Derbe and Lystra, delivering the Jerusalem decisions.

16:5 ends the section 13:1–16:5 in which Gentiles are fully accepted into the church.

Lystra was the home of Timothy, son of a Jewish mother Eunice (and grandmother Lois, 2 Tim 1:5) who had taught him the Scriptures from childhood (2 Tim 3:15). All three had come to faith, presumably on Paul’s first journey. But his father was a Gentile. Jewish law incorporated matrilineal descent (Mishnah: a Jew is a child of a Jewish mother or a convert), but Roman law was patrilineal. Though Paul believed that circumcision was no longer necessary, he had Timothy circumcised so as not to cause offense to the local Jews. Timothy joined Paul and Silas.

### B. Blockages

Paul, Silas and Timothy were twice thwarted by the Holy Spirit:

1. Asia: wanted to enter Asia, presumably along the via Sebaste to Ephesus, but were prevented by the Holy Spirit, so they headed north through Phrygia and Galatia.
2. Bithynia: prevented by the Spirit of Jesus, so passed through Mysia to Troas (a region and a city).

Antioch–Troas 1000 mi/1600 km.

In Troas Paul had a vision: the “Macedonian call.”

### C. Macedonia & Achaia

In Troas, Paul had a vision: the “Macedonian call,” and concluded God was calling him to evangelize Macedonia.

Luke joined the party. The “we” sections of Acts: 16:10-17; 20:5-15; 21:1-18; 27:1–28:16. Luke, the

“beloved physician” (Col 4:14), was a Gentile, assumed to be from Philippi. The party of four (Paul, Silas, Timothy, Luke) sailed Troas–Samothrace (island)—Neapolis (port for Philippi) then walked to Philippi.

### 1. Philippi

Founded by Philip II of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great. Became a Roman colony after the Battle of Philippi 42 BC (Mark Antony and Octavian defeated Brutus and Cassius), settled by army veterans. On the via Egnatia from Dyrrachium on Adriatic (whence by ship to Brundisium and the Appian Way to Rome) to Byzantium.

1. Conversion of Lydia (Acts 16:12-15): evidently not enough Jewish men (10) for a synagogue, they went to a place of prayer. Lydia: a seller of purple from Thyatira (in the region of Lydia), a “worshiper of God” (a God-fearer; a Gentile attracted to Judaism).
2. Paul & Silas imprisoned (16:16-24): Paul exorcized the spirit (Python) from a slave-girl, arousing the opposition of her owners who had profited much. They brought them into the agora before the magistrates, charging them with *religio illicita* (illicit religion). As a Roman colony, Philippi had its own government: two magistrates ( *duoviri*, or *praetores*, στρατηγοί), under whom were two lictors (*lictores*, ῥαβδοῦχοι 35,38) whose symbol of office was a *fascis*, a bundle (*fascis*) of rods with an axe. Paul received 39 lashes 5× (Jewish punishment), beaten with rods (3× (Roman) (2 Cor 11:24-25).
3. Philippian jailer converted (16:25-34)
4. Paul & Silas released (16:35-40): the magistrates sent the lictors to release Paul and Silas, but reported back with alarm that they were Roman citizens. The magistrates themselves apologized and asked them to leave town.

Luke stayed in Philippi, rejoining Paul in Philippi on the return leg of the third journey (20:5). Paul left behind a fledgling church, meeting probably in Lydia’s house: Lydia and her household, the jailer and his household, the slave girl, Luke. Paul had the happiest of relationships with this church.

### 2. Thessalonica

They continued west along the Egnatian Way through Amphipolis and Apollonia to Thessalonica (100 mi/160 km from Philippi), the capital of Macedonia and a large city with a synagogue. For three weeks Paul spoke in the synagogue, and some Jews and many God-fearers believed. But jealous Jews whipped up a mob; unable to find Paul and Silas, they dragged some believers before the authorities, charging, “These men who have turned the world upside down...are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying there there is another king, Jesus.” Jason was made to post bond for them. The believers sent Paul and Silas away by night.

### 3. Berea

They left the Egnatian Way for Berea, a quieter town, off the main road, also with a synagogue. The Jews “received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures to see if these things were so”; Berean has been a popular name for Christian churches etc. But Jews from Thessalonica came and stirred up trouble, so Paul was hustled out of town: some brothers took him to the sea, then to Athens, returning with a message for Silas and Timothy to join him. Paul probably did not intend to go to Athens, but to continue along the Egnatian Way to Dyrrachium on the Adriatic (still in Macedonia).

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### 4. Athens

Golden Age of Athens under Pericles (495-429 BC); much building; democracy. Intellectual life flourished.

- Plato (c. 428-348 BC): student of Socrates, teacher of Aristotle. What we know through our senses is only an imperfect, changeable copy of eternal, unchanging Forms.
- Aristotle (c. 384-322 BC): student at Plato's Academy; tutor to Alexander the Great. Knowledge through empirical observation, reason, experience.
- Epicurus (342-270 BC): founder of Epicureans. A life of moderation in pursuit of pleasure, leading to a life of tranquility free from disturbing passions, superstitious fears, anxiety about death; gods are not interested in human lives.
- Zeno (c. 340-263): founder of Stoicism (met in the painted Stoa in Athenian agora). Self-sufficiency: develop self-control to overcome destructive emotions (e.g. anger, envy, jealousy) and align to nature. "Virtue consists in a will that is in agreement with Nature."

338 Philip II of Macedonia conquered Athens, but his son Alexander the Great spread Athenian culture throughout the world (Hellenism).

146 Rome conquered Athens but loved everything Greek: "Captive Greece led her rude captor captive" (Horace). Rome allowed Athens to be a free city; it remained the intellectual and cultural center of the world. In Paul's day it was a small city, c. 10,000.

While waiting for Silas and Timothy, Paul was provoked within him to speak. He reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearers, and in the marketplace (*agora*).

Silas and Timothy joined Paul in Athens from Berea. Paul sent Timothy to Thessalonica to encourage the church and see how they were doing. Silas also went to Macedonia, probably to Philippi where he received a gift for Paul.

A few came to faith, including Dionysius the Areopagite and Damaris. Paul did not stay long.

### 5. Corinth

Strategic location overlooking isthmus connecting central Greece to Peloponnesus. A major city state in 7th-6th cent. BC. 146 BC destroyed by Rome; 46 Julius Caesar ordered it rebuilt; 44 refounded as Roman colony; 27 BC made capital of Achaia. NT pop. c. 200,000. The center of the Aphrodite cult.

Paul found Aquila, and Jew from Pontus, and his wife Priscilla (diminutive of Prisca), who had been expelled from Rome by Claudius (49). He lived with them and worked as a tentmaker.

As usual, Paul began in the synagogue. Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Timothy bringing good news about the Thessalonian church, Silas bringing a monetary gift from the Philippian church. The three of them wrote two letters to the Thessalonians.

After Jewish opposition, Paul moved next door to the house of Titius Justus, a God-fearer.

Paul spent 18 months in Corinth, then headed home. He sailed from Cenchræa, Corinth's eastern port, where he cut his hair after a vow (Nazirite?). He sailed to Ephesus with Priscilla and Aquila, whom he left there. Paul continued to Caesarea, went up to Jerusalem, then down to Antioch.