

July 24–30

Acts 16–21

“The Lord Had Called Us for to Preach the Gospel”



Paul's Second Mission

Acts 16:1-3

Why do you think Paul had Timothy circumcised before he took him on his mission?

Why do you think that Timothy's compliance to this ritual was important to Jewish members?

Robert J. Matthews

"This action provides an insight into Paul's thinking. He saw a difference between necessity and convenience. With Titus, the question was whether or not circumcision was essential for salvation; thus, Paul opposed it. With Timothy it was a matter of rendering him acceptable to the non-Christian Jews where he would do missionary work. Paul was willing to allow circumcision as a concession, but not as a requirement, so that the Jews would be willing to listen to Timothy teach the gospel." (Studies in Scripture, 6:41)

Paul's Second Mission

Acts 16:9-15

What is mentioned about Lydia's conversion that is important for anyone who is seeking to understand the gospel message to do?

David O. McKay

"If Lydia was the first one baptized, then she has the distinction of being the first person in Europe to accept Christianity. Whether 'her household' means she had children, or whether it refers to her servants or to both we do not know, but they became the nucleus of a thriving branch of the Church in that city, and in Lydia's home town as well." (Ancient Apostles, pg. 186)

Paul's Second Mission

Acts 16:16-22

Why do you think the damsel's masters had Paul arrested instead heading his message?

Paul's Second Mission

Acts 16:23-34

What did Paul and Silas do that prepared the jailer to ask, "what must I do to be saved?"

Paul's Second Mission

Acts 17:1-5,10-12

Why were the Jews more receptive to the gospel message in Berea than Thessalonian?

Marion G. Romney

“No principle of the Gospel is more clearly taught than that God will reward the sincere seeker....

“As to searching the scriptures, you will remember that... [Jesus] told them that if they would learn of Him, they should, ‘Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me’ (John 5:39-40)...

“Luke commends the Jews of Berea as being, ‘... more noble than those in Thessalonica [because they] searched the scriptures daily...’ whether the word of God was so. As a result, ‘many of them believed.’” (CR, April 1957)

Paul's Second Mission

Acts 17:18-23

What was the attitude among the Athenians about understanding and worshiping different gods?

Brigham Young

“All nations, tribes and communities of men worship something.... There dwells within them a crude and undefined impression of a great Supreme and universal Ruler whom they seek to represent and worship in gods made with their own hands....

“The Athenians knew not what to worship, and it seems they were willing to worship a god unknown to them, very likely under the impression that he might be the true God, whom they had tried to represent no doubt in various ways.” (JD, 11:119)

Paul's Second Mission

Acts 17:24-29

How does Paul differentiate Christ from what they worshiped as gods?

David O. McKay

“In the beginning of the Christian Era wise and able men in Athens turned away from [Paul] who challenged much of their philosophy as false and their worship of images as gross error, yet the fact remained that he was the only man in that great city of intellectuals who knew by actual experience that a man may pass through the portals of death and live—the only man in Athens who could clearly sense the difference between the formality of idolatry and the heartfelt worship of the only true and living God....

“Today, as then, too many men and women have other gods to which they give more thought than to the resurrected Lord—the god of pleasure, the god of wealth, the god of indulgence, the god of political power, the god of popularity, the god of race superiority—as varied and numerous as were the gods in ancient Athens and Rome.” (CR, April 1962)

Paul's Second Mission

Acts 17:30-33

Why do you think the Athenians mocked Paul and his teachings?

Quentin L. Cook

“When the Apostle Paul was invited to speak on Mars Hill in Athens, he found some of the same intellectual pretension and absence of true wisdom that exist today. There were philosophers of all kinds... [and] rival groups... of the pagan world.... Paul’s emphasis was the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. When the crowd realized the religious nature of his message, some mocked him; others essentially dismissed him, saying, ‘We will hear thee again of this matter.’ Paul left Athens without any success. Dean Frederic Farrar wrote of this visit: ‘At Athens he founded no church, to Athens he wrote no epistle, and in Athens, often as he passed its neighborhood, he never set foot again’ (Farrar, *The Life and Work of St. Paul*, pg. 312).” (CR, Oct. 2014)

Paul's Third Mission

Acts 19:1-7

What does this teach us about the importance of receiving the gift of the Holy Ghost?

James E. Talmage

"We read of Paul baptizing certain disciples at Ephesus though they had already been baptized after the manner of John's baptism. But in this case, the apostle had reason to doubt that the baptism of which these spoke had been administered by authorized hands, or after proper preliminary education of the candidates....

"Paul knew, as we know, that while John preached the baptism of repentance by water he declared that such was but preliminary to the greater baptism of the Holy Ghost, which Christ should bring. Therefore, in view of such unsatisfactory evidence concerning the validity of their baptism, Paul had baptism administered unto these twelve devout Ephesians in the name of the Lord Jesus, after which he laid his hands upon them, and they received the Holy Ghost." (Articles of Faith, pg. 129)

Paul's Third Mission

Acts 19:24-27,34

What caused the people of Ephesus rise up against Paul and his teaching?

Albert E. Bowen

"This brought the Christian message squarely up against the idolatry of the Ephesians with the result that there was a great conversion from idolatry....

"Paul was teaching the way of life, a thing of transcendent importance to all the race of men, the future of the world. With the purely collateral consequence to the business of a few silversmiths and art craftsmen he had no concern.

"But the incident was not decided on the merits of the respective doctrines concerning the souls and destiny of men. So far as immediate results were concerned a superficial materialism completely smothered and took out of the reckoning the fundamental moral and spiritual issue involved." (CR, Oct. 1944)

Paul's Third Mission

Acts 20:28-32

What is Paul prophesying to the Ephesians?

What did the Ephesians need to do to avoid being led astray?

Andrew C. Skinner

“Apostasy is a conscious act of rebellion against God by deliberately attempting to change divinely appointed doctrine and practice and by opposing God’s chosen leaders. Paul foresaw that once the Apostles met their demise, the demise of the true Church would follow.

"Paul used the analogy of wolves rending the flock of God to describe the thoroughly destructive nature of religious rebellion. Furthermore, he declared without equivocation that apostasy was an internal phenomenon. It was born of the desires of certain members to exalt themselves, to step into the limelight and gather their own group of followers." ("Apostasy, Restoration, and Lessons in Faith," Ensign, Dec. 1995)

Paul's Third Mission

Acts 20:33-35

What do you think Paul means when he says, "it is more blessed to give than to receive"?

Robert J. Matthews

"One of the plainest examples of Paul's integrity was his insistence on working with his own hands for his financial support.... To the Ephesians he said: 'I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.' And to the Corinthians he wrote: 'What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the gospel, I may make the gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the gospel' (1 Cor 9:18)." (Behold the Messiah, pg. 335)

J. Reuben Clark, Jr

“There is something very remarkable about what we have to give under the gospel plan. No matter how much we give of truth, of good example, of righteous living, our stores, our blessings increase, not decrease, by that which we give away....

“We have the truth; we possess the priesthood; both are given into our care. We are responsible for the use we make of them. We are expected to give out of our store all that we possibly can give away, and in proportion as we give unto others, we become thereby more and more enriched ourselves. ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ I repeat, as possessors of truth, our mission is to minister therefrom to others. And the more of truth we give away, the more we shall have. The more we righteously use the priesthood, the greater its powers will grow in us.” (CR, Oct. 1946)

Paul asked to observe Law of Moses rituals

Acts 21:17-21

What problems are the Church leaders having with the local converted Jews?

Paul asked to observe Law of Moses rituals

Acts 21:22-26

What are the Brethren asking Paul to do?

Why did they ask that of Paul?

Can you think of how this example may apply to us, today?

Bruce R. McConkie

“Paul is asked, officially, as a matter of church discipline to pretend that he is a Jew who keeps the Law of Moses.

“Why? What justification can there possibly be for these early saints to reject the spirit and practice of true religion and pretend to conform to the dead letter of a dead law, to a law which can lead nowhere except to spiritual death?

The explanation lies in the semi-converted status of the Jewish saints of Jerusalem. As with all men, the Lord was giving gospel truths to them line upon line, precept upon precept. It was better to have them in the Church, seeking the Spirit, striving to keep the commandments, and trying to work out their salvation, than to leave them without the fold until they gained a full knowledge of all things. Even Peter was not converted to the full until long after he was ordained an apostle.” (DNTC, 2:184)

Bruce R. McConkie

“And so it is today -- conversion is a gradual process. There are many sectarian concepts and practices which individuals who are in the Church must abandon before the gospel system becomes perfect. If there is a lesson for us in these events, it is that staunch and stable members of the Church should be tolerant and charitable toward persons newly coming out of the darkness of the world into the light of the gospel.”

(DNTC, 2:184)

Paul asked to observe Law of Moses rituals

Acts 21:27-31

What was Paul falsely accused of?

What was the real intent of his accusers?

Next Week:

July 31–August 6

Acts 22–28

“A Minister and a Witness”

