

July 24–30. Acts 16–21: “The Lord Had Called Us for to Preach the Gospel”

Paul’s Second Mission

Paul chooses Timothy, the son of a Greek (gentile), to be his companion

Acts 16:1-3

- 1] Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek:
- 2] Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.
- 3] Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

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

(because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek)

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 teaches Lydia. All of her household are converted

Acts 16:9-15

- [9] And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.
- [10] And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.
- [11] Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;
- [12] And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.
- [13] And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was

went to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.

[14] And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

[15] And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

Note that Macedonia is technically in Europe, so this will be the first time there is missionary work in Europe

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

(And on the sabbath we went... where prayer was wont to be made)
(whose heart the Lord opened)
(that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul)

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 heals a young woman that is possessed with a spirit and who was used by her masters by convincing people that she could tell the future.

Acts 16:16-22

[16] And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

[17] The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.

[18] And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

[19] And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,

[20] And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,

[21] And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

[22] And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.

This young woman stated that Paul was a "servant of the most high God."

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

(the hope of their gains was gone)

They were more concerned with the things of the world than the things of God

The way is prepared for Paul to escape from prison. He takes this opportunity to teach and convert the jailer

Acts 16:23-34

[23] And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:

[24] Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

[25] And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

[26] And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

[27] And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

[28] But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

[29] Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,

[30] And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

[31] And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

[32] And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

[33] And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

[34] And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

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

Introduced him to the gospel thru prayer, singing, and praising God despite his afflictions

Stood up for, and showed compassion for the jailer

(Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God)

(Do thyself no harm: for we are all here)

Paul leaves Macedonia and has great success teaching in Thessalonica and Berea

Acts 17:1-5,10-12

[1] Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

[2] And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,

[3] Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

[4] And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.

[5] But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.

[10] And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.

[11] These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.

[12] Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were Greeks, and of men, not a few.

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

(they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so)

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 teaches in Athen at Mars Hill

Acts 17:18-23

[18] Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them

Jesus, and the resurrection.

[19] And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, is?

[20] For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.

[21] (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)

[22] Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.

[23] For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

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

(spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious)

They only seemed interested because of “strange gods” and “strange things to our ears”

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 points out that the things they worship are just gods man-made objects but it was Christ that created them and can give them eternal life

Acts 17:24-29

[24] God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

[25] Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

[26] And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

[27] That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

[28] For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own

poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

[29] Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

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

(dwelleth not in temples made with hands Neither is worshipped with men's hands

we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device)

(God that made the world and all things therein
And hath made of one blood all nations
in him we live, and move, and have our being)

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)

And we tells them it's time to get serious about who they worship because Christ has finished his earthly mission.

Acts 17:30-33

[30] And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

[31] Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

[32] And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this matter.

[33] So Paul departed from among them.

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

They were only interested intellectual debate and dismissed religion

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

Paul goes to Ephesus and finds that some believers there seem to have been baptized by someone who didn’t have the authority

Acts 19:1-7

- [1] And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,
[2] He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.
[3] And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.
[4] Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.
[5] When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.
[6] And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.
[7] And all the men were about twelve.

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

(We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.
Unto John's baptism...
they should believe on him which should come after him)

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 continued to teach among the Ephesians for 2 years and had great success. But eventually he driven out of the city

Acts 19:24-27,34

[24] For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;

[25] Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.

[26] Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:

[27] So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

[34] But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great is Diana of the Ephesians.

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

(ye know that by this craft we have our wealth
our craft is in danger to be set at nought)

The silversmiths used the goddess Diana as a rallying cry for the Ephesians but they were just trying to make money

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 returned to Jerusalem for Pentecost. On his way stopped in Ephesus and addressed and the Elders of the Church

Acts 20:28-32

[28] Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

[29] For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

[30] Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them.

[31] Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears.

[32] And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.

What is Paul prophesying to the Ephesians?

(For I know this
after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you
of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away
disciples after them)

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)

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

(watch, and remember... I ceased not to warn every one)
the word of his grace, which is able to build you up)

And he promises them that if they heed the words of Christ, “to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified”

Paul makes it clear that he has not preached the gospel for any worldly expectations.

Instead he labors for his own support and to help those in need

Acts 20:33-35

[33] I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel.

[34] Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

[35] I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, 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)

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

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 is asked to observe Law of Moses rituals

After Paul returns from his third mission James asks him to participate in a ritual which is part of the Law of Moses

Acts 21:17-21

[17] And when we were come to Jerusalem, the brethren received us gladly.

[18] And the day following Paul went in with us unto James; and all the elders were present.

[19] And when he had saluted them, he declared particularly what things God had wrought among the Gentiles by his ministry.

[20] And when they heard it, they glorified the Lord, and said unto him, Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law:

[21] And they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, saying that they ought not to circumcise their children, neither to walk after the customs.

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

(many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law
they are informed of thee, that thou teachest all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses)

Acts 21:22-26

[22] What is it therefore? the multitude must needs come together: for they will hear that thou art come.

[23] Do therefore this that we say to thee: We have four men which have a vow on them;

[24] Them take, and purify thyself with them, and be at charges with them, that they may shave their heads: and all may know that those things, whereof they were informed concerning thee, are nothing; but that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law.

[25] As touching the Gentiles which believe, we have written and concluded that they observe no such thing, save only that they keep themselves from things offered to idols, and from blood, and from strangled, and from fornication.

[26] Then Paul took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them entered into the temple, to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them.

What are the Brethren asking Paul to do?

Obey rites from the from the Law of Moses – no longer part of the Gospel

Why did they ask that of Paul?

Verse 24

(all may know... that thou thyself also walkest orderly, and keepest the law)

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)

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

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)

Because of this, Paul is falsely accused and imprisoned.

Acts 21:27-31

[27] And when the seven days were almost ended, the Jews which were of Asia, when they saw him in the temple, stirred up all the people, and laid hands on him,

[28] Crying out, Men of Israel, help: This is the man, that teacheth all men every where against the people, and the law, and this place: and further brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place.

[29] (For they had seen before with him in the city Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.)

[30] And all the city was moved, and the people ran together: and they took Paul, and drew him out of the temple: and forthwith the doors were shut.

[31] And as they went about to kill him, tidings came unto the chief captain of the band, that all Jerusalem was in an uproar.

What was Paul falsely accused of?

(brought Greeks also into the temple, and hath polluted this holy place)

What was the real intent of his accusers?

(stirred up all the people)