



Week 14 Acts 15:36-16:40, Second Mission Journey

15:36-41 – Paul & Barnabas part ways

Verse 36 initiates a section of Acts often referred to as Paul's Second Missionary Journey (Acts 15:36-18:22).

1) Paul demanded high commitment from his co-workers, and John-Mark had not met the mark. Even so, Barnabas wanted him to join their team again. Is it clear who was right and who was wrong in this matter? What do you think this difference of opinion reveals about the nature of relationships and decision making within the church? How does it compare with the vision we get from Acts 4:32?

16:1-5 – Timothy joins the team...and is circumcised

2) What sense does this action make in light of the preceding Jerusalem council debate regarding the role of the Law in the church? How does Timothy's racial background play into Paul's decision in this matter?

16:6-10 – Vision of a Macedonian man

One possibility here is that the man seen in the vision was Alexander the Great – a famous Macedonian King who died in 323 BC – though obviously this is only speculation.

3) This passage is full of mysteries and raises many questions. Is there anything that we can take away from this passage regarding our experience of God and how we discern God's will?

16:11-15 – The church in Philippi.

4) Given first century cultural attitudes regarding women, what does this interaction tell us about Paul's approach to mission? Lydia's profession and status as a householder likely meant that she was the overseer of this congregation.

16:16-24 – Another arrest

5) What is the unholy alliance Luke reveals in v. 16 (and underlined in v. 19)? Are there parallels to this kind of relationship in our world today?

6) Was there anything wrong with what the possessed woman was shouting in v. 17?

16:25-40 – Another release

7) In v. 25, Paul & Silas demonstrate remarkable character upon their imprisonment. Where does this come from for them? Why do we have such a difficult time praying/singing through much more minor times of distress?

8) Following the earth quake, why do you think the jailer's initial response was suicide?

9) In vv. 31 – 34, Luke's narrative portrays both a theology of belief and a theology of repentance. Which one gets more airtime in this passage? Which one gets more airtime in our own lives?

10) Why does Paul wait until now to announce his Roman citizenship? What would Lydia and the other believers have thought of the gospel shared by Paul if he had avoided abuse through a technicality (Roman citizenship), while they would have to live with every day?