

Comments About Acts 16

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BIG SANDY, Texas—Recently, I began a series of brief articles to discuss chapters in the book of Acts. This week, we will talk about chapter 16.

May this project encourage you to review the valuable history found in the book of Acts.

Overview of Paul's travels

As we entered into Acts 13, we began reading about Paul's missionary journeys. According to some Bible commentaries, the trips can be categorized in the following manner.

- First missionary journey—Acts 13:1 until Acts 14:28
- Second missionary journey—Acts 15:36 until Acts 18:22
- Third missionary journey—Acts 18:23 until Acts 21:16
- Trip to Rome—Acts 21:17 until Acts 28:31

Timothy was circumcised

In Acts 15, we saw that the contention between Barnabas and Paul was so sharp that they parted from one another—Barnabas taking John Mark and Paul taking Silas (Acts 15:39-41).

From this point forward, the book of Acts focuses more on the trips of Paul over the trips of Barnabas.

- Paul and Silas traveled to Derbe and Lystra and met a disciple named Timothy—whose father was Greek and his mother was Jewish (Acts 16:1).
- When Timothy agreed to travel with Paul, he was circumcised to better serve the brethren (verses 2-5).

Macedonian call

The story continues with the Holy Spirit leading their travel—with a writing style called the personification of the Holy Spirit.

- They were "forbidden" by the Holy Spirit to preach the Word in Asia (verse 6).
- The Spirit did not "permit" them to go into Bithynia (verse 7).

- Paul had a vision to travel to Macedonia (verses 9-10).

Lydia was baptized

A successful woman named Lydia was baptized at Philippi.

- She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira (verse 14).
- She opened her home for Paul's traveling party to stay (verse 15).

Imprisoned and released

Shortly thereafter, Paul and Silas were imprisoned and released.

- God healed a possessed girl by the word of Paul (verses 16-18).
- The masters of the girl were angry because they lost profit from her divination (verse 19) and they influenced the torture and imprisonment of Paul and Silas (verses 20-24).
- When a massive earthquake allowed Paul and Silas to escape (verses 25-26), the jailer was going to kill himself because it happened on his watch (verse 27).
- After Paul stopped the jailer from harming himself, the jailer was baptized (verses 28-34).

Acts 16:31—"So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Roman citizenship

- After the magistrates sent officers to arrest Paul (verses 35-36), Paul asserted the rights of his Roman citizenship to be released (verses 37-40).

It is interesting to note that Paul used his Roman citizenship on three occasions—twice to escape a bad situation (*Acts 16:37* and *Acts 22:25-30*) and once to preach the gospel (*Acts 25:10-11*).