

New Testament 2:

Unit 7 – Paul's Missionary Campaign in Macedonia and Achaia (Acts 15:36-18:17)

The purpose of these notes are first to provide a summary of key points from the PTC Course Notes, and second to provide some extra information that may fill out your understanding of the subject in question.

Introduction

A dispute (15:36-41)

Christians disagree?!

2 missionary journeys

Barnabas with John Mark (his cousin) – Home to Cyprus

Paul with Silas - Home to Syria and Cilicia (Anatolia) – the 2nd

Missionary Journey

Silas

Jerusalem Christian

Roman Citizen

Member of Jerusalem Council

To be the co-author of 1 & 2 Thessalonians (with Paul and Timothy)

Note they visit Thessalonica on this Missionary journey

Result – 15:41 – strengthening.

Exercise – Read through Acts 16:36-18:17 (or if inclined as far as 21:17) and plot onto the following map the route that Paul took



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Timothy – a disciple

Taught the gospel by grandmother Lois and Mother Eunice (c.f. 2 Tim 1:5)

Circumcision – note: this follows the Jerusalem Council where that issue was discussed.

Why? – he comes from mixed background (Father Greek, Mother Jewish) – so Circumcision removed Jewish issue (c.f. 1 Cor 9:19)

Result – 16:5 ‘churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers’

Next Stop – Asia?? (16:6-11)

Regions of Phrygia and Galatia are problematic, then Mysia and Bithynia so on to Troas.

Note – they are kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching (16:6) then Spirit of Jesus from entering (16:7).

Instead they get a vision calling them to Macedonian (16:9)

Troas to Samothrace then Neopolis to Philippi (in Macedonia)

Note – the geographic credibility that this detailed journey summary lends to the text.

Luke inclusion passage (from 16:10-17)

Result – 16:10 ‘called to preach the gospel to them’

Next Stop – Philippi in Macedonia (16:12-40)

Outside the City Gate (note – no temple in Philippi) – to find a place of prayer

Lydia – dealer, wealthy, worshipper of God (God-fearer – Gentile linked in with the Synagogue – presumable in Thyatira)

The Lord opened her heart – her and her household baptised (first European converts)

Slave Girl - predictive spirit

Identified Paul and Luke – ‘servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved’ – reminiscent of the demon possessed man identifying Jesus (c.f. Lk 4:34, 41; 8:28)

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Owners react

First of two Gentile attacks on the Apostles (c.f. 19:23ff) – both due to loss of financial benefit.

Paul and Silas dragged before the Roman Magistrate and accused, not of releasing the evil spirit (that was not a legally punishable offence under Roman law), but of disturbing the peace of the city (remember that they were outside the city gate).

Stripped, beaten, locked up (inner cell, with feet in shackles).

What of the slave girl?

Philippian Gaoler

Earthquake – door open, shackles fall off (everyone!)

Gaoler doomed (as the one responsible for the prisoners incarceration)

Yet all prisoners (not just Paul and Silas) are still there!

The Question ‘What must I do to be saved?’ (16:30)

- before the Roman authorities?
- before God?

The Answer ‘Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved’ (16:31)

They spoke the Word of the Lord to him and others in his household – they believed (16:34).

Note the chronology of this account is less important to the fact they became believers.

Postscript – Paul and Silas are Roman Citizens – someone has stuffed up. It is one thing to persecute the ‘christians’, but not the ‘Romans’!

Exercise:

Read Phil 1:12-30

Paul writing, perhaps reflecting on his experience in gaol in Phillippi speaks of the way he considers his sufferings – what can we gleam from his motivations which help him deal with the injustices?

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Through Amphipolis and Apollonia and to Thessalonica.

To the synagogue.

Task: reason with the from the scriptures (17:2)

Result – Some Jews and a large number of God-fearing Greeks and a few prominent women (17:4)

But also other Jews opposed (17:5)

Paul and Silas leave (after only three Sabbaths)

Bear in mind – 1 and 2 Thessalonians is written to this group!

Under the cover of night – onto Berea.

Notice the pattern (as with Thessalonica):

To the synagogue.

Task: Preaching the Word of God (c.f. 17:13)

Result – ‘they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures everyday to see if what Paul said was true’ (17:11)

Many Jews believed, a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.

But also – the Jews back from Thessalonica arrive and agitate (17:13).

Paul is sent, Silas and Timothy hold back.

Next Stop – Athens (17:16-34)

Not a planned stop! – but a new opportunity.

Why waiting for Silas and Timothy, Paul does some sight-seeing!

Back to the synagogue – there for the Jews and God-fearing Greeks.

Also into the marketplace – there for the Epicurean and Stoic Philosophers.

Note: this is the first time in Acts that Paul addresses a Non-Jewish Audience.

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Read Acts 17:16-34.

Consider some of the ‘gospel sermons’ we have heard to Jewish audiences in Acts (e.g. Acts 2:14-36). Acts 17 in Athens is to Gentiles. Look for what it says about Jesus and particularly his death and resurrection. What is different about the approach?

The Gospel speech

17:16-21 – The World ignores God.

17:22-28 – God doesn’t ignore the World

17:29-34 – Stop ignoring God

A Gospel approach

Manner – start where they are at (17:23)

Matter – focus on God before people (17:24-31)

- a. God made the World and everything in it (v24)
- b. God gives all people life, breath and everything else (v25)
- c. God, from one man Adam, made all men and governs (v26)
- d. God did all so that people would reach out to him (v27)
- e. God sustains us all (v28)

Method – Quote them back to themselves (17:28) and then call them back to God by calling them to Jesus (17:30-31)

Result – some sneer, others ask for more, and a few men became followers of Paul and believed (17:34)

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For next Week:

- Read Unit 8