

MISSIONS IS CHURCH PLANTING  
**Paul's Second Missionary Journey**

Acts 15:36-18:22a

Week 3 - July 28

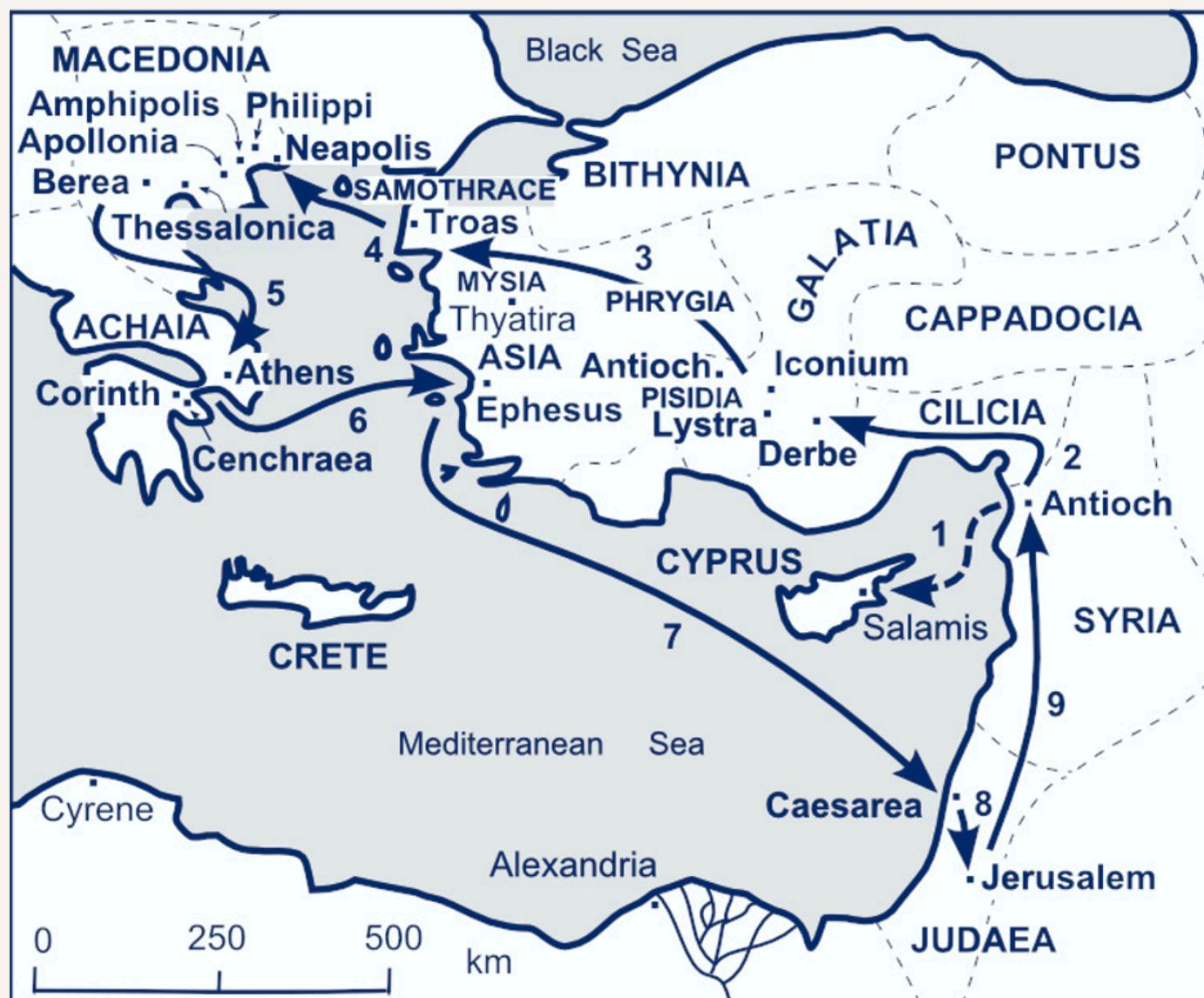


Questions

1. What does it mean for you to listen to the Holy Spirit?
2. What is the difference between your plans and God's plan?
3. What does it mean for a household to come to faith in Jesus?
4. Why is it important to worship the Lord in times of difficulty?



Commentary





## Commentary

### **Paul and Barnabas Part Ways, Acts 15:36-41**

As Paul and Barnabas prepared for the second missionary journey, they had a serious disagreement. Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them. Paul disagreed because John Mark as left them early in the first missionary journey. The disagreement was so sharp that they separated from one another. It is heartbreaking that Paul would break his relationship with Barnabas, the son of encouragement. It was Barnabas who stood up for Paul when everyone else was afraid of him. It was Barnabas that brought Paul to Antioch where they would be called by the Holy Spirit to missions as church planting. It was humble Barnabas who had no problem when the narrative changed from Barnabas and Saul to Paul and Barnabas. But, human disagreement, as heart breaking as it is, does not stop or thwart the missionary purposes of God.

Barnabas and John Mark sail to Cyprus. We do not hear anything else about their journey. But Barnabas did what he always did. He encouraged and disciplined John Mark. John Mark would later write the book of Mark, the first of the four Gospels written. Later Paul would say that John Mark was profitable to him for ministry.

Paul and Silas left on Paul's second missionary journey. On their trip from Jerusalem, they encouraged the churches in Syria (the region around Antioch) and Cilicia (the region just north of Antioch) strengthening the churches in the Word and the testimony of how God had opened the door to the Gentiles.

### **Revisiting the Churches, Acts 16:1-5**

Paul and Silas revisited the churches in Galatia—Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch in Pisidia. Paul never left the churches he planted to exist in isolation. He visited them to teach them the Word, encourage them in persecution, and to train and raise up elders and leader for the churches. At Derbe Paul picked up Timothy to join his missionary team. He also delivered the letter from the Jerusalem Council to the churches. Verse 5 sums up the visit with the churches. They were strengthened in the faith; they grew spiritually stronger. The churches increased as people were being saved daily and new house churches were planted. Luke joins the missionary team and he stops writing "they" and starts to use "we."



## Commentary

### **The Importance of Hearing the Holy Spirit, Acts 16:6-10**

From Galatia Paul planned to go to the province of Asia. However, two times the Holy Spirit forbade him to enter Asia in verses 6 and 7. He then traveled to Troas on the western border of Asia. There he had the vision of a Macedonian man asking Paul to come over and help us. Immediately Paul, recognizing this was the will of God, he left for the province of Macedonia.

There are two very important truths in the passage that we do not need to miss. One is the importance of being in a spiritual position in prayer and the Word to hear and obey the leading of God the Holy Spirit. Paul had his plan, but God had another plan for him. Proverbs 19:21 says, "Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand." If Paul had pushed ahead in his plan of going into Asia instead of hearing and obeying the Holy Spirit, he would have missed the purpose of God. Hearing and obeying the Holy Spirit is the difference between walking by faith in the infinite wisdom of God and walking by sight in our limited wisdom.

Two, hearing the Holy Spirit means immediate obedience. Delayed obedience is immediate disobedience.

### **Church Planting in Philippi, Acts 16:11-40**

Philippi was the first city in Europe in which Paul planted churches. Philippi was a Roman colony. There was no synagogue in the city which indicates that the Jewish population was tiny. Ten Jewish male were required to build a synagogue. That is why when Paul arrived, on the Sabbath he went to the river where he expected the Jew to meet. He finds a group of women and proclaims the gospel. God works in the heart of one of the women, Lydia a Gentile God seeker. She believes and invites Paul to her home to share the gospel. She is baptized along with her household (her oikos) and a church was planted in her house.

As Paul continued to share the gospel, make disciples, and plant house churches, he was followed by a demonized girl who mocked him and his team. Finally, after several days Paul cast the demon out of the girl.



## Commentary

When her owners saw they had lost their profit from her fortune telling, they drug Paul to the rulers of Philippi, and accused him of disturbing the city by teaching against worship of Caesar. The crowd joined in the accusation. Paul and Silas were beaten with rods and thrown into prison.

In prisons Paul and Silas were praying and singing praise to God. The other prisoners listened to them. Then God miraculously shook the prison, broke the bonds of the prisoners, and opened the prison gates. Instead of escaping, Paul used the occasion to lead the Philippian jailer and his household (his oikos) to the Lord and a church was planted in the jailer's house.

When we are in times of difficulties, if instead of praying and praising God, we complain and grumble, we will not see God do mighty things. And we will not lead many people to Jesus. Learn from Paul and Silas how to see God do great things.

The church at Philippi became a partner with Paul in the spreading of the gospel by sacrificially and joyfully supporting Paul when no other church did. The church at Philippi is a model of how we need to graciously and generously support our Acts 1:8 partners.

### **Church Planting at Thessalonica, Acts 17:1-9**

Paul's point of entry in a city was to go first to the synagogue. In the Thessalonian synagogue for three Sabbaths he reasoned with the Jews from the Old Testament scripture about the sin atoning death of Jesus and His resurrection. Thus, proving Jesus is the Messiah. The whole Old Testament is about Jesus.

Some believed along with some God-fearing Greeks and Gentile ladies. The unbelieving Jews became jealous of the number who joined the faith. They stirred up the rabble of the city into a mob. Looking for Paul, they took one of the new believers Jason. The accusation against Paul and his missionary team was "they have turned the world upside down." God help us turn Wynne and the world upside down with the gospel, which is really turning the world right side up. Paul and his team left in the night so the persecution would end.



## Commentary

Paul would later write to the Thessalonian church commending them for being a multiplying church (1 Thessalonians 1:8). They took the gospel and planted churches in their own province of Macedonia but also in their neighboring province of Achaia. They also impacted globally in the Roman Empire. They shared the gospel with traders and businessmen passing through Thessalonica. They would disciple those believers who would return to their home cities and plant churches. The Thessalonian church is a good model of our vision, "Making multiplying disciples from Wynne to the world."

### **Church Planting at Berea, Acts 18:19-15**

At Berea Paul uses his normal entry strategy and went to synagogue and taught the gospel from the Old Testament. The Bereans searched the scriptures to see if what Paul was reasoning with them was true. Many Jews and Gentiles believed. House churches were planted. Then the Jews from Thessalonica began stirring up crowds in opposition. Paul left Silas and Timothy in Berea to strengthen the church and left for Athens.

### **Paul in Athens, Acts 18:16-34**

When Paul entered Athens, he was deeply disturbed within because the city was filled with idols to Greek gods. He went into the synagogue and reasoned the gospel from the Old Testament. He went to the marketplace talking about Jesus and the resurrection to anyone who was there. Athens was renowned for its philosophers. Two schools of philosophers heard Paul and took him to speak to the philosophers at the Areopagus on Mars Hill.

Paul pointed to the altar "to the unknown god" and proclaimed to them the true God. He focused on four truths. One God created the world and all that is in it. He is Lord over all. Two, God gives common grace to all giving life and breath. His common grace is for the good of the nations and for His glory. The natural revelation declares who He is. Psalm 11:1, "The heavens declare the glory of the Lord; and the firmament shows his handiwork." Three God will judge the world. Four he proclaimed the death and resurrection of Jesus as the only way of salvation. When the philosophers heard about the resurrection some mocked Paul. Some were curious and wanted to hear more, and some believed.



## Commentary

As was his practice Paul would have planted churches among those who believed. Two who believed are mentioned, Dionysius and a lady named Damaris indicating that churches were planted in their households. History tells of a church established Athens by Dionysius.

### **Church Planting in Corinth, Acts 18:1-15**

At Corinth Paul added Aquila and Priscilla to his missionary team. Silas and Timothy rejoin him.

Paul went to the synagogue and taught that Jesus is the Messiah. Although the ruler of the synagogue believed with his household, the Jews opposed Paul. He then turned to the Gentiles, and many believed. The Lord spoke to Paul not to be afraid of speaking the word in the face of oppositions. He gave Paul the assurance of His presence that there were many more that the Lord would save. Paul stayed in Corinth a year and a half, proclaiming the gospel and building up the church as it increased.

An example of the Lord's protection is given when the Jews in a united attack brought Paul before the Roman proconsul. But on hearing Paul, Gailio dismisses the charges.

### **Paul Returns to Antioch, Acts 18-22a**

Paul left Corinth to return to his sending church in Antioch. On the travel back he took Aquila and Priscilla with him. They stopped at Ephesus where Paul left Aquila and Priscilla. He entered in the synagogue and reasoned with them about Jesus being the Messiah. They asked him to stay longer but he declined and said he would return if it was God's will.

Paul then returned to Antioch and reported to the church all that God had done in planting churches in Macedonia. Paul never lost sight of the partnership with the church at Antioch and the importance of encouraging them.



## Commentary

### **Prayer Time**

Ask several people to pray for:

1. Our Acts 1:8 partner Les and the elite team of men involved in church planting movements in different parts of the world. They will respond to church planting movements started in various area of the globe to train leaders, so the movements expand.
2. Our Acts 1:8 partner Jamie Naramore and his family as they prepare to move to Queens, New York City to plant churches among the Arabic speaking millions.
3. God to encourage us through the reports of our Acts 1:8 partners during the Missions is Church Planting Conference and lead us in a deeper and more consistent prayer support for them.
4. The Lord to call out people from WBC to go to the nations.