

**The SECOND JOURNEY:**

# Separation, Surprise & the Sweet Simplicity of Salvation

*'What must I DO to be saved?'*

**Study 16a: EVEN THE APOSTLES COULDN'T ACHIEVE UNITY (15:35-16:5)**

**15:36-39 Must Christians (even Apostles) see eye to eye on everything?**

This second missionary tour, covering the years from 51 to 54, does not come about as the first one did. There God spoke and ordered. Here man proposed. Paul said to Barnabas, Let us go (15:36). The dissension which arose between them and led to a separation, serves to show how God can carry on his work in spite of human frailty. -- **J.M. Stifler**, *Acts of the Apostles* p.148

We should note, too, that after the apostolic disagreement, they split up the territory to be covered. In modern times, schismatics build churches on opposite street corners, or form duplicate mission boards to serve the same countries. There have been more than a few cases where the separatists thought they were doing the Lord's will if they gained "converts" from each other's churches. But Barnabas and Mark chose to go to Cyprus, and Paul and Silas went to Galatia. -- **W.S. LaSor**, *Church Alive* p.240

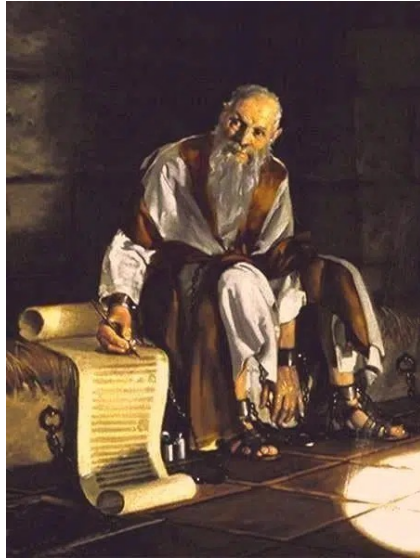
The last thing we know about Mark, the "servant of Jesus," whom Paul for a time would not trust, but to whom Barnabas gave a second chance, is that it was he who wrote the Gospel of the perfect Servant. Perhaps his moral courage was stiffened by Paul's severity and confirmed by the tenderness of Barnabas. -- **G. Campbell Morgan**, *The Acts of the Apostles* p.289

**15:40-16:3 Is Paul compromising the Jerusalem decree? (15:19,20)**

This action on Paul's part has led to much criticism. He has been charged with inconsistency, because he refused to have Titus

circumcised and yet had Timothy circumcised. But there was a major difference between the two young helpers. Titus was a Gentile. Timothy as the son of a Jewess was born a Jew. To submit Titus to

circumcision would clearly have been to yield to the demands of the Judaizers. Paul refused. There was no reason to circumcise a Gentile. Not to circumcise Timothy, on the other hand, would have been to restrict Timothy's sphere of usefulness. Neither he nor Titus could have been of any significant use in Paul's ministry to Jews, Titus because he was a Gentile, Timothy because he was a Jew who had repudiated the law of Moses. -- **W.S. LaSor**, *op.cit.*, p.245



**16:4,5 Which cities were affected by the Jerusalem decree? (15:23,36,41)**

At last Paul came to Lystra, the place of the stones, the scars of which were still upon his body; the memories of the day when they beat fast and furiously upon him were still with him. At Lystra he found Timothy. How often God's servants return, after years of absence, to some rough and rugged place of battle, and of blood, and of agony, and find the fruitage. When did Timothy become a disciple? The question cannot be answered dogmatically, but the probability is that he became a disciple in those days of Paul's previous visit. Paul had once been a young man, and had watched the stoning of a saint called Stephen, minding the clothes of such as stoned him. He had heard the dying prayer, and the vision of the face of Stephen had fastened like goads in his heart and life. At Lystra he had gone through Stephen's experience, and perchance another man had seen the stones hurled. Now he went back to find Timothy in the place of stones -- **G. Campbell Morgan**, *op.cit.*, p.290

**Study 16b: PLANS -- PAUL'S AND PROVIDENCE'S (16:6-12)**

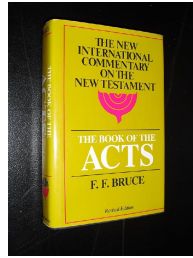
**16:6-8 What surprises does the Lord have for Paul? [Does Jerusalem have input into Paul's intended itinerary?]**

That invasion of Europe was not in the mind of Paul, but it was evidently in the mind of the Spirit. He did not start from Antioch on this second journey with any intention of going to Europe ... Paul began the journey by desiring to revisit churches already founded. He ended at Troas with a vision, a surprise, a new call, an open door, and vast expanses stretching out before his eyes, of the possibility of new work, and with the conviction that this was the mind of the Lord. -- **G. Campbell Morgan**, *op.cit.*, p.287

In this passage of Paul from Asia to Europe a great providential decision was taking effect, of which, as children of the West, we

cannot think without the profoundest thankfulness. Christianity arose in Asia and among an Oriental people; and it might have been expected to spread first among those races to which the Jews were most akin. Instead of coming west, it might have gone eastward. It might have penetrated into Arabia and taken possession of those regions where the faith of the False Prophet now holds sway. It might have visited the wandering tribes of Central Asia, and, piercing its way down through the passes of the Himalayas, reared its temples on the banks of the Ganges, the Indus, and the Godavary. It might have travelled farther east to deliver the swarming millions of China from the cold secularism of Confucius. Had it done so, missionaries from India and Japan might have been coming to England at the present day to tell the story of the Cross. But Providence conferred on Europe a blessed priority, and the fate of our continent was decided when Paul

crossed the Aegean. -- **James Stalker** , *The Life of St. Paul* p.92



to "we" is so simple or convincing as this. A writer incorporating into his narrative the diary of a personal eyewitness other than himself would not have done so in such an unobtrusive way. Whether Luke was practising as a physician in Troas at the time or was there for some other purpose we have no means of discovering; at any rate, he joined Paul, Silas and Timothy and went over to Macedonia with them, for, as he says, when Paul related the vision to his companions, "immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them." -- **F.F. Bruce**, *Acts* p.327

### 16:9-12 Note a subtle change in the narration

At this point the narrator shows unobtrusively that he himself had now joined the missionary party as a fourth member, by continuing the story in the first instead of the third person plural. Here the first of the "we" sections of the book begins. No other account of the transition from "they"

## Study 16c: SALVATION IN ITS SIMPLICITY (16:13-40)

### 16:13-15 How complicated was the salvation of Lydia's household?

### 16:16-22 Note the character of false religion (cf. 19:23-28)

If the devil can once be permitted to co-operate, he will tell the truth. But the apostle, and the Lord of the apostle, will not accept the testimony of evil, even though its words be the words of truth. A grave error in the history of the Christian Church has been that she has been content, again and again, to admit the testimony of evil men because the testimony in itself was true ... Satan, defeated in his attempt to form an unholy alliance with the apostles in order ultimately to weaken them, hid himself behind the law, and breathed through the spirit of law ... The devil's methods of opposition are those of alliance and antagonism, and the only serious one is the first. Let us beware of it. Do not let us imagine that we can take into our fellowship and enlist under one banner, men who simply affirm truth about Jesus, unless in their own lives there is an absolute loyalty to the Lord Christ. -- **G. Campbell Morgan**, *op.cit.*, pp.300-303

A prominent feature of the work in Macedonia was the part taken in it by women. Amid the general decay of religions throughout the world at this period, many women everywhere sought satisfaction for their religious instincts in the pure faith of the synagogue. In Macedonia, perhaps on account of its sound morality, these female

proselytes were more numerous than elsewhere; and they pressed in large numbers into the Christian Church. This was a good omen; it was a prophecy of the happy change in the lot of woman which Christianity was to produce in the nations of the West. If man owes much to Christ, woman owes still more. He has delivered her from the degradation of being man's slave and plaything and raised her to be his friend and his equal before heaven; while, on the other hand, a new glory has been added to Christ's religion by the fineness and dignity with which it is invested when embodied in the female character. These things were vividly illustrated in the earliest footsteps of Christianity on the European continent. The first convert was a woman; at the first Christian service held on European soil the heart of Lydia was opened to receive the truth; and the change which passed upon her prefigured what woman in Europe was to become under the influence of Christianity.. In the same town of Philippi there was seen too at the same time an equally representative image of the condition of woman in Europe before the gospel reached it, in a poor girl, possessed of a spirit of divination and held in slavery by men who were making gain out of her misfortune, who Paul restored to sanity. Her misery and degradation were a symbol of the disfiguration, as Lydia's sweet and benevolent Christian character was of the transfiguration, of womanhood. -- **James Stalker**, *op.cit.*, pp.93,94

### 16:23-34 How complex is the jailer's baptismal catechism?

## How does the Spirit lead the Church?

Analysis of the passage brings into prominence certain separated incidents of personal experience. There is the story first, of contention and of the separation between Paul and Barnabas. Then follows the account of how Paul started on his journey in the comradeship of Silas, and found Timothy at Lystra. Then we have the record of a further movement, on to Troas, and we see Paul and the man of Macedonia. The supreme value of the paragraph, however, is to be found in synthesis, rather than analysis. When we look at these separated incidents in the light of certain declarations concerning the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we shall see the strange and contradictory and troublesome events merging into a mosaic, until the pattern stands clear and beautiful upon the page of the Divine overruling ...

The spiritual value of the paragraph is evidently that of its revelation of the guidance of the Spirit of God by the hindrances of people of God ... Here is the revelation of the fact that the Spirit guides, not by flaming visions always, not by words articulate in human ears, but by circumstances, by common-place things, by difficult things, by dark things, by disappointing things. The Spirit guides and moulds and fashions all the pathway ... It is the watcher for the Lord who see the Lord. If we make up our minds that the way of guidance is the way of flaming vision, and rolling thunder, an articulate voice, and a lifting to a height of ecstasy, then we may never be guided. --**G. C. Morgan**, *Acts* pp.287-294