

I. THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL

A. Not everyone was pleased with what Paul and Barnabas had done on the First Missionary Journey.

- 1. Some of the Jewish Christians (later called "Judaizers") were angry because Gentiles had become Christians without first becoming Jews.**
 - a. These Judaizers believed that to be saved a person had to believe in Jesus and keep the law of Moses by being circumcised.
 - b. These Judaizers came down from Jerusalem and began to teach their false doctrine of salvation in the church in Antioch. Paul and Barnabas argued very strongly against them.
 - c. It was decided, in order to settle the matter, to have a church meeting (a "council") in Jerusalem where the apostles and elders from the churches in Jerusalem and Antioch would discuss it.
- 2. Paul and Barnabas came up from Antioch to Jerusalem and were warmly received by the church there. There was absolutely no difference between the Good News preached by Paul and that preached by the other apostles in Jerusalem.**
 - a. Several men spoke at the "Jerusalem Council" including Peter (he had first preached the Gospel to the Gentiles), Paul and Barnabas (they reported what God had done among the Gentiles) and James (he quoted from the Bible to prove that it was always God's plan to include Gentiles among His people).
 - b. The decision of the Jerusalem Council was that the Gentiles do not have to be circumcised or keep the laws of Moses. Salvation is by grace alone and not by works.
 - c. Instead, the Council commanded the Gentiles not to do things which would offend the Jews: to avoid idols, sexual immorality and the eating of blood (these things were part of paganism). A letter was written by the Council and sent to all the churches delivered by Paul and Barnabas (Acts 15:23-29).

B. The decision of the Jerusalem Council brought great joy to the Gentile Christians but it was not the end of the evil influence of the Judaizers. They went *against* the decisions of the church and spread their errors.

- 1. They even came to Antioch and led Peter and Barnabas astray.**
 - a. The Christians in Antioch, both Jews and Gentiles, ate together as fellow-believers.
 - b. Peter was among them, but when the Judaizers came to Antioch, Peter stopped eating with the Gentiles. Peter was acting like a hypocrite and his wrong behavior influenced even Barnabas.
 - c. Paul stood in front of them all in order to rebuke Peter to his face, and Peter repented (Gal. 2:11-14).
- 2. The Judaizers spread their false message thru the churches, trying to have the Gentiles circumcised.**
 - a. Because Paul was the preacher of salvation by grace alone without works and without circumcision the Judaizers especially attacked Paul: they said that Paul was no true apostle, that his message was a new and strange message and not from Jesus Christ.
 - b. The Judaizers followed Paul and went into the churches which he had founded and spread lies about him and his gospel. Several of his letters are written against the Judaizers (esp. Galatians).

II. THE BEGINNING OF THE SECOND JOURNEY

A. The 2nd Missionary Journey began when Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go again and visit ..." (Acts 15:36).

- 1. Barnabas was pleased to go but he wanted to bring John Mark along again.**
 - a. John Mark had come on the 1st Journey but had gone home when things became too difficult.
 - b. Barnabas probably thought that John Mark was more mature now but Paul did not think that he was ready to come on the 2nd Missionary Journey. Sadly, Paul & Barnabas had a very sharp argument about it.
 - c. They went their separate ways. Barnabas and Mark went to Cyprus but the book of Acts tells us nothing about their work. It concentrates on Paul. But later Paul had good things to say about Mark (II Tim. 4:11).
- 2. Paul's companion on the 2nd Missionary Journey was Silas.**
 - a. Paul and Silas travelled from Antioch to Derbe & Lystra where Paul had preached on the 1st Journey.
 - b. In Lystra they met a young man called Timothy. Paul took him to be a missionary helper; Paul trained him to be a preacher & minister of the Gospel. Paul wrote 2 letters to Timothy; Paul loved him as a son.
 - c. Another person who joined Paul, Silas and Timothy was *Luke*, a Gentile doctor. He wrote *Acts*.

B. God is in control of where His Gospel is preached. God gave Paul a vision to tell him where to preach.

- 1. Paul and his companions preached the Gospel through the area of Phrygia and Galatia (see map).**
 - a. Then they attempted to go into the region of Asia but they were "forbidden of the Holy Ghost" to do so (Acts 16:6). Perhaps the Lord gave them some sign or even spoke to them not to go there.
 - b. After this they tried to go into Bithynia but "the Spirit suffered them not" (v. 7).
 - c. So they stopped at Troas, wondering what they should do next. Troas was by the coast.
- 2. At Troas Paul had a vision. We call the vision "the Macedonian Call."**

- a. Paul saw a man of Macedonia who asked Paul, "Come over into Macedonia and help us" (v. 9).
- b. It was clearly God's will that the Gospel go West into what we now call *Europe*.
- c. The first main city in Macedonia was Philippi.

III. EVENTS IN PHILIPPI

A. Paul began his work in Philippi looking for a synagogue of the Jews but *there was none*. The only Jews were a few women who met by the river on the Sabbath Day to pray. So Paul started there.

1. Among that group of women was Lydia. She was a wealthy woman for she sold purple cloth.

- a. Lydia listened to Paul's preaching and she believed because the Lord opened her heart (Acts 16:14).
- b. This shows us that God is in control of even the response to His Gospel. All men and women have hard hearts of stone but God has the power to open hearts. He did so to Lydia's heart.
- c. We are like Lydia. We do not believe because we are better or smarter but because God opened our heart.
- d. Lydia was happy to have heard the Gospel. Her life was changed through believing in Jesus. To show her gratitude she offered her house as a place for the missionaries to stay.

2. In Philippi there was also a poor slave girl who was under the power of an evil spirit. By that evil spirit she was able to tell the future. And by that power her masters who owned her made a lot of money.

- a. As the missionaries went to the river for prayer this slave girl followed them crying out in a loud voice, "These men are the servants of the most high God which show unto us the way of salvation" (v. 17).
- b. This happened day after day. After several days Paul was grieved and said to her, "I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!" (v. 18). And suddenly the slave girl was healed.
- c. The masters of the slave girl were furious. Without her powers the men could make no money out of her.
- d. They grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place in front of the rulers. "These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city" (v. 20).

3. Without even giving Paul and Silas a fair trial, the rulers of the city beat the missionaries severely.

- a. Paul and Silas had their clothes stripped from their backs, and then their bare backs were whipped until they were bruised and bleeding.
- b. Then they were thrown into prison. The jailor was told to guard them very carefully, so he threw them into the deepest, darkest, most miserable part of the prison, and put their feet in stocks.
- c. Paul and Silas did not know what would happen to them. How long? Would they be put to death? But they did not fear or complain. Although they were in a lot of pain *they sang praises to God* at midnight.

B. At midnight, as Paul & Silas sang in the prison, the ground began to shake with an earthquake!

1. This was no normal earthquake but an earthquake which God sent to deliver Paul & Silas from prison.

- a. The earthquake did not destroy the prison by making the walls crumble to the ground. That would have crushed Paul and Silas and the other prisoners to death. The earthquake *shook* the prison doors *open* and shook the chains off from every prisoner's hands and feet.
- b. Every prisoner was free to escape, but no prisoner moved. They had heard the singing of Paul and Silas and this had made quite an impression on them. But God had a reason for the prisoners staying.
- c. At that moment the jailor, who had been sleeping, woke out of his sleep. He saw the prison doors wide open, and he thought that all his prisoners had escaped. He knew that because he had allowed them to escape he would be put to death, so he took out of his sword to kill himself.

2. But, now it became clear why Paul and Silas were in prison. It was for the salvation of the jailor.

- a. Paul shouted with a loud voice, "*Do thyself no harm, for we are all here*" (Acts 16:28).
- b. The jailor was filled with amazement and great fear. He had seen Paul and Silas when they arrived at prison; he had heard them singing; he had understood that they were preaching about salvation; and now there was the earthquake and none of his prisoners had escaped.
- c. He ran into the cell where Paul and Silas were, fell down before them trembling with fear, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30). Salvation, salvation from death, from sin, what must I do?
- d. Paul preached the Gospel of Christ to him beginning with, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved and thy house" (Acts 16:31). So, Paul preached Jesus to the jailor and his family.

3. After the jailor believed he was a changed man: before he was harsh and cruel; now he was kind.

- a. He took Paul and Silas out of jail in the middle of the night, washed their wounds and fed them in his own home. Then he took them back to the jail because he did not have the power to release them.
- b. The next morning the rulers of Philippi sent word to the jail to let Paul and Silas go, but they refused to leave until they received an apology. Paul & Silas were *both Roman citizens* and they had rights: a Roman citizen must have a fair trial, but these men had been beaten, jailed and tortured!
- c. The rulers were afraid. They came in person to ask Paul & Silas to forgive their wrong, and asked them to leave Philippi. Paul & Silas left but only after going to Lydia's house and encouraging the believers there.