

# **BIB204 NT2 Early Church**

Unit 5c

The 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journeys

Presented by the



**LANCASTER BIBLE COLLEGE**  
CAPITAL SEMINARY & GRADUATE SCHOOL

For Use by the

**Blue Letter Bible Institute**

[Web: Study.Bible](http://Study.Bible)

A Ministry of the

**Blue Letter Bible**

[Web: BlueLetterBible.org](http://BlueLetterBible.org)

So this is our third segment in this unit, Unit 5, and we're going to pick up in Acts 16. And this is really going to become a bit of a flyover now because there's just too much material. My aim in this segment is to cover 16:1 of the Book of Acts through 21:16 of the Book of Acts because that covers the second and the third missionary journey. Now, a caveat or basically a note is the third missionary journey, Paul does not return to Antioch. He goes straight to Jerusalem, which is why I'm breaking it up that way. So in chapter 16, we have Paul coming to Derbe and to Lystra. Those are cities in Southern Galatia. There's a disciple there by the name of Timothy who is half-Jewish. His father is Greek. His mother is Jewish. Paul circumcises him so that he can walk into the synagogue and not give offense to Jews. He just wants to eliminate that problem. So they strengthen the churches because of the presence of Paul. At the same time, Paul is spreading the news about the agreement at Jerusalem regarding Gentiles and Jews worshipping together. And so, at some point, they go through the region of Phrygia and Galatia. That's verse 6 of chapter 16. The Holy Spirit did not permit Paul to speak the word in Asia. After a couple of blocks by the Lord, Paul is allowed to go into Macedonia. And you do see that in verse 10 of Acts 16. He's traveling into Macedonia.

So far, we have two documents that have been composed, arguably: the letter of James and the letter to the Galatians. So here we have, in verse 11 of chapter 16, Paul arriving with his party, with Silas and with Timothy, to Philippi, in the district or the province of Macedonia. And it's a Roman colony. And they remain in that city. They go down to the riverside. They speak to the women who are there, and Paul preaches the gospel. A woman named Lydia opens her heart to the gospel. She's baptized and then the church is remanded to her home. Verse 16 to 24, there is the spectacle of a slave girl who is possessed by a spirit, a demon, going about, talking about Paul and his party being servants of the Most High God who proclaim to you a way of salvation. Paul casts that demon out. The masters of the slave girl are not pleased. Paul and Silas are beaten, and they are jailed. Paul and Silas, they sing. Even while their feet are in stocks, they are chained, they worship God. There is an earthquake at midnight and all the bonds are broken. And the jailer thinks that all the prisoners have escaped and so he attempts to kill himself, but Paul prevents him from doing that. The Philippian jailer and his household are converted to the gospel. So all of it, so far, everything I've just said, is covered in verses 16, so far, until verse 33. Paul takes them that same hour of the night and baptizes them after the Philippian jailer cleans the wounds that Paul and Silas had sustained. Verses 35 to 40, it's daybreak. The magistrates sent to the police. They want to release these men, but then it comes out that Paul and Silas are Roman citizens, and that creates a bit of a furor because you're not supposed to beat Roman citizens the way these men were beaten. So verse 39, they receive an apology from the city and they are asked to leave. So they leave, they visit Lydia in the home church, and then they encourage the disciples and they leave.

Chapter 17, we see them passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia. And so they come to another city in the province of Macedonia called Thessalonica. Now, the time period at this juncture is probably AD 51, 52. That's probably the timeframe that we're dealing with. So they come to Thessalonica. There's a synagogue of the Jews. Paul goes in and reasons for three Sabbaths with the Jews in the synagogue. He reasons from the Scriptures. He proclaims Christ. He proves that Jesus is the Christ. There are many that are persuaded. A great many of devout Greeks (verse 4 of chapter 17). A few of the leading women. But the Jews are jealous. We've seen this before. We've seen this during the first missionary journey. The Jews are jealous. They form a mob. They set the city in an uproar. They attack the house of Jason. Jason is probably a diaspora Jew living in Thessalonica and they are looking to bring the people in Jason's home out to the crowd. That would include Paul and Silas and Timothy. They couldn't find them,

though, and they dragged Jason and some of the brothers before the city authorities and they accused Jason of harboring men who have turned the world upside down. We see that in verse 6. They're shouting, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, and Jason (verse 7) has received them, and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus." And the people and the city authorities were disturbed when they heard these things. And so they get a fine of sorts from Jason and they let them go.

Immediately, Paul and Silas are sent away to Berea, another city in Macedonia. And they arrive and they go to the Jewish synagogue. Now, surprisingly, the Jews in Berea listen to what Paul has to say and they believe. There is no muss. There's no fuss. They don't strain at it. They just simply believe. They're more honorable, we're told. Verse 11, "Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men." But look what happens. Next verse. "Jews from Thessalonica learned that the word of God was proclaimed by Paul at Berea also. They came there too." They agitated, they stirred up the crowds. "The brothers sent Paul off on his way to the sea, but Silas and Timothy remained there (at Berea). Those who conducted Paul brought him as far as Athens, and after receiving a command for Silas and Timothy to come to him as soon as possible, they departed."

Now, the reason Silas and Timothy remained there, we think, that is, the scholarly community that deals with reconstruction of the historical background of the New Testament, we think that Paul sent Silas and Timothy back to Thessalonica with 1 Thessalonians, and then with respect to the response from the Thessalonians who have come to Paul, Paul sends them back with 2 Thessalonians, what we now call 2 Thessalonians. So that's four letters so far that have been composed. This is 51 to 52 AD. So, so far, we have four documents. Within the next three years or four, maybe even longer, no later than six, the gospel of Mark will be composed from Rome, we think, but that's still a couple of years off. So that's arguably five documents, we think.

Verse 16 of chapter 17, Paul is waiting at Athens. He is thoroughly exercised about the idols in the city. He sees idols on every hand. You have diaspora Jews living in Athens. And so he gets into a dispute with Epicureans and Stoics. That's verse 18 of chapter 17. But they have no respect for him. Notice what they ask him in the latter clauses of verse 18. And some said, "What does this babbler wish to say?" The term babbler there, *spermologos*, seed picker, basically a picture of someone who picks in the fields and therefore has no intellectual inclinations, no aspirations to develop one's mind in terms of the Greek culture and its veneration for education through much of that empire's history. "What does this babbler wish to say?" He's uncouth. He seems to be a preacher of foreign divinities, foreign gods because Jesus was talking about the resurrection. And for them, resurrection is a nonstarter. They don't believe in a concept such as resurrection.

Anyway, they bring him (verse 19) to Mars Hill, the Areopagus, Areios Pagos, the Hill of Mars. They want to know what he's talking about. "What is this new teaching? You bring some strange things to our ears. We want to know what this means." So Paul, we read starting in verse 22 all the way to verse 31, Paul gives a speech, Mars Hill speech. And he quotes a couple of their poets in order to make a connection with them. But he funnels his message to the preaching of Christ and his resurrection. And at that juncture, we see in verse 32, "Now when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked. But others said, 'We will hear you again about this.' So Paul went out from their midst. But some men joined

him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.” So that ends chapter 17. So, so far, we have four documents. The fifth one, the gospel of Mark on the horizon.

So Paul leaves Athens and he goes to Corinth. Again, before he leaves Athens, Silas and Timothy have come back to him. And if you read the beginning portions of those letters, in fact, if you hold your place here in Acts 18 and please come with me to 1 Thessalonians first of all, I just want to look at the introductory material, just to highlight this. So we have... Let me get this page open here. 1

Thessalonians first. So the opening, “Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy.” Silvanus is the long form of Silas. “To the church of the Thessalonians in God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace.” And then, of course, Paul talks about how “We are thankful for you. Testimony of your faith has been made apparent to everyone in Macedonia and Achaia,” and so on and so forth. And so you take a look at chapter 2 of that particular letter and look at verse 17. “But since we were torn away from you, brothers, for a short time, in person not in heart, we endeavored the more eagerly and with great desire to see you face to face, because we wanted to come to you—I, Paul, again and again—but Satan hindered us.”

The hindrance of Satan is basically the Jews coming and stirring up opposition against Paul and his apostolic party, thereby driving them out of Thessalonica. And remember, the first place that they went was Philippi. They got beaten there and sent out. They went to Thessalonica. Some believed at Thessalonica, but the ones that did not believe stirred up opposition. So Paul and his apostolic party were pushed out into Berea and they evangelized Berea. There was a more positive response. But the Jews from Thessalonica came to Berea and stirred things up so that Paul had to be sent to the sea coast and onto Athens. So Paul could not go back to Thessalonica to continue the work of ministry, to build up that particular church. That’s what he means.

Look at 1 Thessalonians 3. “Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we were willing to be left behind at Athens alone, and we sent Timothy, our brother and God's coworker in the gospel of Christ, to establish and exhort you in your faith.” “We sent Timothy to establish you because I couldn’t come because Satan hindered us.” So, so far, so good. I gave you background as to the composition of 1 Thessalonians. Now take a look at 2 Thessalonians. You see 2 Thessalonians 1:1-1:2. You have “Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy,” and then you have “To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ,” and then grace and peace, the greeting. And so, of course, now you have, with respect to location, when this was written, you have Timothy being sent to this particular church again. Give me a second. Yes. Chapter 2 verse 1. “Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers, not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.” And so Timothy is sent back. In between Paul’s travels to Athens, you have two letters that are sent by the apostles back and the main messenger is Timothy, who is sent to establish these churches.

Okay. So we’re leaving Thessalonians behind now and we’re coming back to Acts 18. In Acts 18, after Paul speaks at Mars Hill, he leaves. He goes to Corinth and he meets Aquila and Priscilla. They are all tentmakers, so they work well together. It just so happens that Claudius commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. We can actually narrow down the timeframe in which Claudius orders the Jews to leave Rome. Historically, according to Suetonius and according to Tertullian who quotes Suetonius, there was

a riot at Rome with the Jews. You had some Jews who trusted in Messiah and you had some Jews that did not. So it became a quarrel in AD 49. It was significant enough, but it didn't really last. It didn't have any staying power. At the time, it was an incident. Strictly an incident. It did not spread out over the years. Claudius broke it up and ordered the Jews to leave Rome. So Priscilla and Aquila are believers. So they are spending time in Corinth. Paul joins with them and he begins to go to synagogue at Corinth and he begins to engage in proof, rabbinic proofs and argumentation with respect to the gospel. He waits for Silas and Timothy to come back from Macedonia.

Look at verse 5 of chapter 18. "When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia." That's our clue. They came back from Macedonia after doing what Paul requested that they do: go back to Thessalonica, establish the church of Thessalonica, answer their questions with what we now know to be 1 and 2 Thessalonians. When Silas and Timothy arrive, Paul begins to proclaim the gospel. And of course, at the moment of decision, the Jews refuse. Paul dissociates from them and he goes to the house of a man named Titius Justus. That's verse 7. His house was next door to the synagogue. The ruler of the synagogue, though, by the name of Crispus, he believed, so he had to leave the synagogue. The person who took his place was called Sosthenes. Sosthenes would eventually come to believe the gospel himself and he would get beaten by the Jews that do not in front of the proconsul's seat. And so 1 Corinthians, which is written in about AD 55, features this man called Sosthenes, interestingly enough.

But let's summarize verses 9 all the way to verse 17. God, I should say the Lord Jesus, assures Paul (verse 9) to not be afraid because he is with him. No one will attack him. There are many people in the city of Corinth who will believe. Paul stays there for 18 months. So the second missionary journey is a bit longer than the first, trending towards two years. Gallio is proconsul of Achaia. The Jews make a united attack on Paul. This is verse 12. And they bring him before the bema, the tribunal, and they accuse him of teaching people to worship God contrary to the law. That's going to get mentioned when Paul arrives at Jerusalem. Paul is about to defend himself and Gallio basically cuts him off and says to the Jews, "I don't care. It's your law. You judge him yourself." And so the Jews (verse 17) sees Sosthenes, the ruler of the synagogue, and they beat him in front of the tribunal, because at this point, Sosthenes has converted to Christ.

After this, verse 18, Paul stays for many days longer. He leaves the brothers. He goes to Syria. That's where his home church is. Priscilla and Aquila go with him because they can't go to Rome. They're still stuck. At Cenchreae, he cut his hair because he was under a vow. So we're looking at about 52, maybe 53 AD. He was under a vow. They went to Ephesus. He left them there. He went and did short term missionary work in the synagogue at Ephesus, but he could not stay (verse 20). They asked him to stay for a longer period. He declined, but he said he would return to them (verse 21). They landed at Caesarea in Palestine. He went up and greeted the church at Jerusalem, and then he traveled back to Antioch, traveled north. He spent some time there. He departed. He went from one place to the next through the region of Galatia, the four churches: Pisidian Antioch, Lystra, Iconium, Derbe. He went to Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples. So the region of Phrygia then, the Phrygio-Galatian region, which basically means that he went to these four churches that we now call the churches at Galatia and he was strengthening the disciples.

Verses 24 to 28 of chapter 18 speak of an individual, a Jew by the name of Apollos, originally from Alexandria, Egypt, eloquent, competent in the Scriptures but did not know anything about Messiah. He spoke boldly in the synagogue. He only knew the baptism of John. That's verse 25. Priscilla and Aquila

heard him because they had been left behind in Ephesus, and they explained to him that Jesus had already come and fulfilled the Scriptures. He wished to go to Achaia, where you would find Corinth, and the brothers encouraged him to go. And he went and he helped the believers in Corinth because he refuted the Jews in public, showing by the Scriptures that the Christ was Jesus.

So at this point, go back to verse 23 of chapter 18. He spends some time in his home church, Paul did, at Antioch. Then he left. This is the third missionary journey. In the third missionary journey, he travels back through the Galatian churches. He travels through Phrygia. Not much evangelization in Phrygia. He's strengthening all the disciples. So chapter 19, Paul passes through the inland country (verse 1). He comes to Ephesus. He finds disciples there and he asks them if they received the Holy Spirit. They don't know what he's talking about. They've only been baptized at John's baptism. And so he preaches the gospel. He lays hands on them. The Holy Spirit falls on them. They believe. They are baptized. He goes into the synagogue (verse 8). He speaks boldly for three months about the kingdom of God. He encounters opposition. He separates himself (verse 9). He reasons in the hall of Tyrannus. And so he's at Ephesus for two years. This takes us from AD 52, 53 to about AD 54, 55. At AD 54, 55, he will begin writing to the Corinthians because of the troubles within the two-year period that they begin to encounter despite the powerful teaching of Apollos. So all the residents in Asia hear the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks (verse 10).

We read an interesting section about seven sons of a Jewish exorcist who are themselves exorcists. The father of these seven exorcists is named Sceva and they attempt to coopt the name of Jesus to cast out a demon. And it does not go well for them. We see this in verses 11 through 17. This happens in Ephesus. These men are beaten, stripped naked, and the believers hear about it. And what we find, what's interesting is in verse 18 of chapter 19. Many of those who are now believers, they come. They confess and divulge their practices. It turns out you have some believers who are practicing magic. And they bring their books together and they burn them up. Whatever they destroyed that day by fire, it cost about 50,000 pieces of silver. So when that obstacle is removed, the gospel simply continues to spread.

Paul resolves to go to Jerusalem (verse 21 of chapter 19). He's going to pass through Macedonia and Achaia. He's going to go to Jerusalem because he wants to go to Rome from Jerusalem. He stays in Asia for a while. There's a disturbance in Ephesus. Because of the preaching of the gospel, silversmiths who build little idols of Artemis can no longer sell their wares. So they create a citywide disturbance that is focused in the amphitheater at Ephesus for the space of about two hours (verse 34 of chapter 19). They cry out with one voice, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" The town clerk has to remind them that this is an unlawful assembly. Rome might hear of this and get upset with them and penalize them, so he disperses the assembly.

But chapter 20 now, after the uproar is done with, Paul sends for the disciples. He encourages them, he leaves, and he goes through Macedonia, Berea, Thessalonica, Philippi. At this point, he has written 1 Corinthians. Interesting thing about the Corinthian letters is Paul writes four letters. We only have two that survive. So the second Corinthians letter is 1 Corinthians. The fourth Corinthians letter is 2 Corinthians. That's a real thumbnail sketch. It's more complicated than that, but that's basically what happened. So that brings us to about seven documents thereabouts with the New Testament. The gospel of Mark has been written already. So he goes through Greece. He spends three months there (verse 3). There's a plot against him by the Jews as he gets ready to go back home to Syrian Antioch, so

he goes back through Macedonia. They sail away from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread (verse 6). They come to Troas. They stay there for a week.

Eutychus. This next section there deals with Eutychus, a young man who fell asleep during Paul's teaching which lasted for hours, all day long and into the night. He fell out of a window and was taken up dead. He fell down from the third story, we are told in verse 9 of chapter 20, because he was overcome by sleep. So he fell down and he was dead, but Paul went down, bent over him, and took him in his arms and raised him from the dead. "Don't be alarmed. His life is in him," he says. Verse 11, Paul has gone up. He broke bread and he ate and he talked with them some more until daybreak, and then he left. And Eutychus was alive and everyone was comforted about that. Paul continues his travel. He goes to the ship. They set sail for Assos and they go to Mitylene. That's verse 14. From there, they go to Chios. These are small islands or they are areas that are on the coast. So Paul is staying sort of close to land but traveling on the sea. The next day, they touch at Samos (verse 15). And after that, they go to Miletus. And we're told in verse 16, and this is where we'll end this segment, "Paul had decided to sail past Ephesus, so that he might not have to spend time in Asia, for he was hastening to be at Jerusalem, if possible, on the day of Pentecost."

So what we've done so far, ending here at verse 16, is we've run through the second and the third missionary journeys here. The second missionary journey started in 16:6. That ended around 18:20, 21, 22. By the time you get to 18:23, Paul is passing through Galatia and Phrygia, strengthening the disciples, and he's making his way to Ephesus. He goes to Ephesus. That's the subject of all of chapter 19. And then in chapter 20, Paul's intent is to go to Jerusalem and we are treated to a description of his journey towards Jerusalem. He's not going home to Antioch. He's going straight to Jerusalem to be there before Pentecost.