

# Acts of the Apostles: Bible Study Outline #6

## Overview / Outline

- **N. Paul's Second Missionary Tour / Paul at Thessalonica / Paul at Berea / Paul at Athens / Sermon on Mars Hill (17:1-34)**

**Summary:** The second missionary journey of the apostle Paul begins with the events following the meeting in Jerusalem (Acts 15:1-29), and ends with his return to Antioch in Syria (Acts 18:22). In the second missionary journey, Paul's work as an apostle of Jesus Christ takes the gospel throughout Asia Minor and finally into Europe (beginning with Thessalonica and ending with Corinth). This journey will take approximately three years (ca. AD 50-53) and cover a distance of about 2,700 miles (1,290 by sea, 1,410 by land). During this time Paul, working with Silas, established a number of congregations of the Lord's church throughout Asia and Europe, and wrote two letters to the church at Thessalonica while in Corinth (AD 52-53).

Paul's Second Missionary Journey – includes the following significant events:

- Thessalonica
  - Reasoned in the Jewish synagogue – Paul accused of treason (his life is in danger) – Brethren send Paul and Silas away
- Berea
  - Jews from Thessalonica come to Berea and stir up trouble – Brethren send Paul away by sea
    - Paul and Silas in Thessalonica (17:1-9)
    - Paul and Silas in Berea (17:10-15)
    - Paul in Athens (17:16-22)
    - Paul's speech at the Areopagus (17:22-31)
    - Different reactions to Paul's speech; some become believers (17:32-34)

- **O. Paul's Second Missionary Tour / Paul at Corinth / Third Missionary Journey (18:1-22)**

**Summary:** The second half of Paul's second missionary journey begins with the apostle traveling to Athens, Corinth and Ephesus, and ends with his return to Antioch in Syria where he remains briefly before leaving for Galatia and Phrygia to strengthen the disciples. During this part of his second missionary journey Paul will meet Aquila and Priscilla who will play a major role in helping to ground the church in Corinth, and whom Paul will take with him to Ephesus and leave there to help that newly established church.

- **Athens** – Paul taught to all who would listen in synagogues, in market places, and Mars Hill
  - **Corinth** – Stayed with Aquila and Priscilla (worked as a tentmaker) – Paul preached in the synagogue every Sabbath – Timothy and Silas join Paul bringing good news from Macedonia – Justus converted – Crispus and his household converted – 1 & 2 Thessalonians written to church in Thessalonica – Paul remained in Corinth 1 ½ years – Jews accuse Paul of persuading men "to worship God contrary to the law"
  - **Ephesus** – Paul preached briefly in the synagogue – Left Priscilla and Aquila at Ephesus
  - Sailed to Caesarea (possibly went to Jerusalem to celebrate "feast")
  - **Antioch in Syria** – Remained in Antioch for a time before leaving for Galatia and Phrygia to strengthen the disciples
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- Paul's ministry in Corinth (18:1-17)
  - Paul returns to Antioch of Syria via Ephesus (18:18-22)

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- **P. Paul's Third Missionary Tour (18:23-28) / Paul at Ephesus / Miracles at Ephesus (19:1-41)**

**Summary:** Several commentators have suggested that Paul's brief stay in Antioch of Syria was due to the fact that Paul had learned that false teachers had been sent to Corinth and to the churches in Galatia with letters of commendation (2 Cor 3:1), and preaching another gospel (Gal 1:6; 2 Cor 1:4). They were teachers of Judaism who were preaching the necessity of holding to certain aspects of the Law of Moses (such as circumcision) to be acceptable to God. Despite the fact that this issue had been settled during the meeting of the apostles and elders in Jerusalem (Acts 15), and that Paul and Silas had personally delivered letters confirming this decision to the churches in Derbe, Listra and Iconium, it is only reasonable to assume some of these teachers of Judaism were not ready to surrender to the apostles' decision.

Therefore, Paul's primary purpose during this third journey will be to strengthen the brethren in the churches he has already helped to establish. During this time Paul will also write letters to the church in Corinth (1 and 2 Corinthians), the churches in Galatia (Galatians), and the church in Rome (Romans).

It seems that Paul sets out on this third journey alone, with the possibility that he was also accompanied by Timothy. The only evidence suggesting Timothy was with Paul is that the two are together again in Ephesus (Acts 19:22). What became of Silas? The truth is that we are uncertain where Silas may have been during the latter part of Paul's second missionary journey as well as during his third journey. The narrative in Acts implies that Paul may have left Athens and reached Corinth before Timothy and Silas were able to join him there. Their arrival in Corinth is implied by Paul statement concerning "the brethren who came from Macedonia" (2 Cor 11:9). It is also implied by Acts 18:18 that Silas did not leave Corinth at the same time as Paul, but what became of Silas after that point is unclear. If Silas is Silvanus, which virtually every commentator agrees, then he is mentioned along with Paul and Timothy as having preached Christ among the Corinthians (compare 2 Cor 1:19 with Acts 18:5). In 1st and 2nd Thessalonians Silvanus was apparently known by the brethren in Thessalonica because all three send greetings to the church there (1 Thess 1:1, and 2 Thess 1:1; compare to Acts 17:1-9). In 1st Peter Silvanus is mentioned as a "faithful brother" who took Peter's letter to the churches of the Dispersion (1 Pet 1:1; 5:12). Other than those references we have no further indication of what became of Silas (Silvanus).

During Paul's third journey we read "he departed and went over the region of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples" (Acts 18:23). Luke also adds "Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus" ( Acts 19:1). The ministry of Apollos in Ephesus (Acts 18:24-28) had taken place before Paul arrived, and while Aquila and Priscilla were still there. From there Apollos went Corinth to work with the church there (perhaps with the recommendation of Aquila and Priscilla). But after becoming innocently embroiled in the strife there (1 Cor 1-4), Apollos left Corinth and refused to return even after Paul's request (1 Cor 16:12).

There are several key events that take place in Ephesus during the first part of Paul's four year-long third missionary journey (AD 54-58):

- Paul finds disciples of John the Baptist who were ignorant of John's teaching about repentance, Jesus, the Holy Spirit and baptism (Acts 19:2-7).
- Paul's preaching Christ in the synagogue for three months resulted in having to move to the school of Tyrannus where he preached for 2 years (Acts 19:8-10)
- The impact of Paul's work in Ephesus was that "all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:10). This would result in the founding of the church at Colossae and the other churches of Asia mentioned in Revelation 1:11.
- Paul's miracles and preaching also led to the wholesale rejection of magical arts and burning of magic books (Acts 19:11-20)
- Paul's preaching of Jesus Christ led to a riot in Ephesus (the center of the worship of Diana) prompted by Demetrius and other craftsmen of the city who were losing money from their trade of manufacturing shrines and statues of the goddess (Acts 19:23-41).