

# **OUR** *Guide* FOR USE IN *the Protestant Reformed Sunday School*

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## Lesson 72

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### *Paul Is Sent to Europe*

#### **The Scripture Lesson** *Acts 15:33 -16:15*

Paul and Barnabas continued for a while to work in Antioch of Syria. But Paul began to think again about the churches that he and Barnabas had started on their missionary journey. He said to Barnabas, "Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do."

Barnabas liked that idea. So they began to make plans to go on a second missionary journey. But then a problem arose. Barnabas thought that they should take Mark along with them as their helper. Paul said no. Paul remembered that Mark had gone with them the last time, and that he had left them when the work became difficult. But Barnabas was sure that Mark could be trusted *now*, and that he would be a faithful helper.

Neither Paul nor Barnabas would give in. Paul could not persuade Barnabas. Barnabas could not persuade Paul. So, because they could not agree, they decided to separate. But we believe that the Lord used even that argument for the good of His church. For Barnabas and Paul, two great missionaries, could certainly do more work *separately* than they could have done together. Barnabas and Mark went to the island of Cyprus, while Paul chose Silas and went to the

*OUR GUIDE* is published by the Protestant Reformed Sunday School Association.

churches in Derbe and Lystra and Iconium.

In Lystra, Paul found a second helper. He was a young man named Timothy. At the time of Paul's first visit to Lystra, Timothy and his mother had been converted from the Jewish to the Christian religion. When Paul arrived in Lystra on this second journey, he found Timothy to be a God-fearing, pious, serious-minded young man. Paul asked Timothy to come with him and Silas on this second missionary journey. And Timothy said yes.

After visiting the churches in this area, Paul had to decide what to do next. He thought first that perhaps they should go farther west, and preach in the towns of the province of Asia. But the Holy Spirit told him not to do that. Paul then headed north, hoping to preach in the province of Bithynia. But the Spirit said again, "Don't go into Bithynia."

Paul continued on to the city of Troas. Here the Lord had no work for them either. But across the Aegean Sea was Macedonia, in the continent of Europe. In the middle of the night the Lord gave Paul a vision. Paul saw a man who said, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." The very next day Paul and his companions prepared to set sail for Macedonia, to preach the Word of God in Europe.

They came first to the city of Philippi. This city had only a very few Jews. On the Sabbath day Paul went to a riverside, the only place where any of the Philippians worshiped God. And there he found just a few women. Paul preached Christ to them. And the Lord opened the heart of one, whose name was Lydia, so that she believed. A small beginning it was. But Paul was satisfied. The Lord had sent him to Europe. The Lord knew best. Paul would leave the results to the Lord.

### ***Imprisoned in Philippi***

*Acts 16:16-25*

One day, when Paul and his companions were in Philippi, they were met by a slave-girl who had a spirit of divination. That she had a *spirit* means that there was in her a *devil*, which controlled her, so that she would do and say whatever *he* wished. This particular devil was a spirit of *divination* — that is, he would tell people's *fortunes*. People would ask the girl what was going to happen, and the devil would answer them through the speaking of the girl.

The devil did not really know what would happen in the future of course. Only God knows that. But the devil often guessed right, and the people were fooled. They were willing to pay money to the masters of the girl in order to have their fortunes told. Fortune telling is an abomination to God. The owners of the girl, however, were happy to use her in this wicked business in order to make themselves rich.

The devil did not like to see the missionaries come to Philippi. So he decided to try to destroy their work. He made the girl follow Paul around, shouting, "These men are the servants of the most high God, which show us the way of salvation." This constant shouting, by a girl who was thought to be crazy, must have made people poke fun of the preaching of Paul.

After this went on for many days, Paul finally turned to the girl and spoke to the spirit in her. He said, "I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And the spirit did so at once. He came out, not because he *wanted* to, but only because Jesus Christ is far stronger than he.

When Christ says, "Come out," no demon may say, "But I do not want to come out."

This miracle of Paul was a wonderful thing for the girl. She was free at last of that awful devil. But the girl's masters were furious when they found out that, because the devil had been cast out, the girl could no longer tell fortunes. So they decided to try to get even with the missionaries. They grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them to the rulers of the city. With a crowd of people gathered around they told the rulers that these two Jews were troubling the city, and were teaching customs that were not right for Romans to have. The crowd knew practically nothing about Paul and Silas, but they did not like Jews. It made them angry to hear that these two Jews had the nerve to try to change the customs of the Romans. So they began shouting that these two Jews were guilty and should be punished.

A noisy crowd of people always made the rulers nervous. Eager to quiet the uproar, they did not even ask for proof for the charges against Paul and Silas. They simply gave in to the demands of the people and ordered that the two Jews be beaten and thrown into prison.

So Paul and Silas were beaten with rods till their backs were all bloody and sore. Then they were put into a dark dungeon in the jail, and their feet were put into stocks so that they could hardly move. In this painful condition the two missionaries were able yet to thank and praise the Lord, who had counted them worthy to suffer for His name's sake. At midnight their prayers and songs of praise went up to God. And the other prisoners heard it.

### **MEMORY WORK**

#### *Group A*

Acts 16:9 "And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us."

#### *Group B*

Acts 16:25 "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them"

## ACTIVITIES

*This paper has been prepared in the hope that it will be used by students of all ages. The activities are designed so that the oldest will be challenged, and the youngest will find some of it within reach. Parents should encourage their children to attempt only what they can handle without frustration. For some that will be much, for others little.*

### DO YOU AGREE?

*If you do, write Yes; if you do not, write No.*

- \_\_\_ 1. Paul suggested to Barnabas that they go again to visit the churches that they had established on their earlier missionary journey.
- \_\_\_ 2. After considering it further, the two missionaries decided that it would be better if they were to separate, in order that, with two missionary parties, they could accomplish more than would be possible were they to stay together.
- \_\_\_ 3. Barnabas took John Mark and went by boat to Cyprus, while Paul took Silas and went by land to Derbe and Lystra.
- \_\_\_ 4. In Lystra, Paul gained a second helper, a young man by the name of Timothy.
- \_\_\_ 5. When they had finished visiting the churches, Paul conferred with Silas and Timothy and decided to bring the gospel into Europe.
- \_\_\_ 6. The first recorded European convert was a woman by the name of Lydia.
- \_\_\_ 7. In Philippi a slave-girl who was possessed by a demon began following the missionaries, shouting for all to hear that these men were servants of God.
- \_\_\_ 8. After Paul at last commanded the demon to come out of the slave-girl, her masters were happy to see her in her right mind.
- \_\_\_ 9. Paul and Silas were brought before the magistrates of Philippi, charged with teaching things that were unlawful for Romans to do.
- \_\_\_ 10. The magistrates, who were careful to judge according to Roman law, demanded that the accusers of the missionaries produce evidence that the charges were true.
- \_\_\_ 11. Paul and Silas were then beaten and put in prison, with their feet put in stocks.

\_\_\_ 12. At midnight the other prisoners heard the voices of Paul and Silas out of the dungeon, praying and singing praise to God.

### QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER READERS

1. Barnabas wanted to take Mark along on another missionary journey. Why did Paul not want to do that? How did the Lord use even this disagreement for the good of His church?
2. Where did Paul find Timothy? Why did Paul want to take this young man along on the rest of his second missionary journey?
3. Why did Paul not go into the Roman province of Asia or into the province of Bithynia? How did the Lord direct him where next to go to preach the gospel?
4. In what city of Macedonia did Paul first preach in the continent of Europe? Who was the first person there to be converted to Christianity?
5. What did the "Spirit of divination" do through a slave-girl in Philippi? How were her masters able to use that work of a demon to make money for themselves?
6. What did the demon do with the girl in order, if possible, to spoil the work of the missionaries?
7. What did Paul do about the demon? Why were the masters of the girl angry about that?
8. Where did the masters of the girl take Paul and Silas? What charge did they bring against the missionaries?
9. Why did the judges decide to punish Paul and Silas, without giving them first a fair trial? How did they punish the two missionaries?
10. What did Paul and Silas do to be witnesses to their Savior even in the dark dungeon?

## COMPLETING SENTENCES

1. Many of the Judaizers were not convinced by the Jerusalem Council. Long afterwards they were still trying to undermine the work of the apostle Paul in the Gentile churches of Galatia. And the Galatian Christians were apparently beginning to believe those men who would constrain them to be \_\_\_\_\_ (Gal. 6:12). Paul was very disturbed when he learned of that, and he wrote an epistle to the Galatians to urge them not to forsake the truth. "O foolish Galatians," he wrote, "who hath \_\_\_\_\_ you, that ye should not obey the \_\_\_\_\_?" And he continued, "Are ye so \_\_\_\_\_? having begun in the \_\_\_\_\_ (that is, believing in salvation by *faith*), are ye now made perfect in the \_\_\_\_\_ (that is, by the works of the *law*)?" (Gal. 3:1, 3). For himself, Paul said, "God \_\_\_\_\_ that I should \_\_\_\_\_, save in the \_\_\_\_\_ of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Gal. 6:14).

2. Judas and Silas, having delivered to the church in Antioch the decision of the Jerusalem Council, \_\_\_\_\_ there a space, and then were dismissed to return to Jerusalem. Notwithstanding, it pleased \_\_\_\_\_ to abide there still. Undoubtedly he joined Paul and Barnabas in teaching and \_\_\_\_\_ the word of the Lord in Antioch. There were, in fact, "many others" involved in teaching and preaching in Antioch, so that Paul and Barnabas could feel free to leave the church there in order to go again and \_\_\_\_\_ the brethren in every city where they had before preached the gospel, to see how they were doing (Acts 15:33-36).

3. The intention of Paul and Barnabas was to go on a second missionary journey *together*. God, however, willed otherwise, for the two men ended up parting ways and forming two missionary parties. That happened because of a disagreement between the two missionaries. Barnabas was \_\_\_\_\_ to take with them \_\_\_\_\_, whose surname was Mark. Paul, on the other hand, thought it not good to take one who had, on the first missionary journey, \_\_\_\_\_ from

them and went not to the \_\_\_\_\_. The \_\_\_\_\_ was so \_\_\_\_\_ between Paul and Barnabas over this question that they departed \_\_\_\_\_ one from the other, with Barnabas taking \_\_\_\_\_ and sailing to \_\_\_\_\_ and Paul choosing \_\_\_\_\_ and going through Syria and \_\_\_\_\_, confirming the churches. Thus did the Lord use even the infirmities of these two great missionaries for the good of the church — for they undoubtedly did more work laboring separately, each with his own assistants, than they could have accomplished together (Acts 15:37-41).

4. Paul went this time by land from Antioch of Syria to the province of Galatia. The first city he visited therefore was \_\_\_\_\_, and then \_\_\_\_\_. It was in the latter city that Paul gained a second helper. There was there a disciple named \_\_\_\_\_, whose mother was a \_\_\_\_\_, but his father was a \_\_\_\_\_. From his mother, Timothy learned the Jewish religion. Apparently both were converted from Judaism to Christianity at the time of Paul's first visit to Lystra, for Luke notes that, at the time of Paul's second visit, his mother was a believer, and Timothy himself was well reported of by the \_\_\_\_\_ in Lystra and in \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 16:1, 2).

5. After having \_\_\_\_\_ Timothy because of the \_\_\_\_\_ which were in those quarters, Paul left Lystra with his two assistants and visited the rest of the churches of southern Galatia, delivering to them copies of the \_\_\_\_\_ which were ordained by the apostles and \_\_\_\_\_ in the council at Jerusalem. Through the work of these three men, the churches were established in the \_\_\_\_\_ and increased in \_\_\_\_\_ daily (Acts 16:3-6).

6. With that work accomplished, Paul had to decide where to go next. Perhaps he thought first to go west to cities in the province of Asia. The missionaries were, however, \_\_\_\_\_ of the Holy Ghost to \_\_\_\_\_ the word in that

province. Then, turning northward, they found that the Spirit suffered them not to go into \_\_\_\_\_. The missionary party went therefore northwest to the city of Troas, and there they received positive instructions for their labor. For a man appeared to Paul in a night vision saying, "Come over into \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ us" (Acts 16:6-9).

7. The meaning of the vision was unmistakable. Paul was being directed by the Spirit to go into Europe. The missionaries made plans therefore, without any delay, to sail from Troas. Their destination was \_\_\_\_\_, which was the \_\_\_\_\_ city of that part of Macedonia, and a \_\_\_\_\_. Apparently there were few Jews in this city, for the place for worship on the Sabbath seems to have been a riverside, rather than a synagogue. Here Paul went and found a group of \_\_\_\_\_ who had resorted thither. Among them was a woman by the name of \_\_\_\_\_, a seller of purple. She was a Gentile who had before been converted to the religion of the Jews. Her heart the Lord now \_\_\_\_\_ so that she \_\_\_\_\_ to the things spoken by Paul, believed his word, and was baptized, with her \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 16:10-15).

8. One day while the missionaries were going to the place of prayer in Philippi they encountered a slave-girl who was \_\_\_\_\_ with a spirit of \_\_\_\_\_. The divining spirit made of the girl a fortune-teller, and the superstitious Romans in Philippi were willing to pay money to have her pry for them into the future. She therefore brought her masters much \_\_\_\_\_ by her \_\_\_\_\_. The devil delights in such deception, and in the kind of power it gives him over men's minds. In the arrival of the missionaries the devil recognized immediately a threat to his own power. Determined to keep the people of Philippi from taking seriously the preaching of the missionaries, the demon compelled the girl to follow them, shouting continually, "These men are the servants of the most high \_\_\_\_\_, which show unto us the way of \_\_\_\_\_" (Acts 16:16, 17).

9. After this distraction continued for \_\_\_\_\_ days, Paul, being \_\_\_\_\_, at last turned and said to the spirit, I \_\_\_\_\_ thee in the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus Christ to come \_\_\_\_\_ of her. Paul thus made it clear that it was not his own power being exercised here, but Christ's. And from the outcome it was clear that the authority of Christ over the spirit of divination was absolute. For it took but a word from Paul, and the devil came out that same \_\_\_\_\_ — that is, at once (Acts 16:17, 18).

10. The masters of the girl were furious, for without the spirit of divination the poor girl would no longer be able to tell fortunes, and the hope of her masters' \_\_\_\_\_ was \_\_\_\_\_. In order at least to get revenge, the men seized two of the missionaries, Paul and \_\_\_\_\_, and dragged them to the \_\_\_\_\_ (the public square, where the offices and courts were located) and brought them to the rulers (the lower officers), who in turn brought them to the \_\_\_\_\_, or supreme judges (Acts 16:19, 20).

11. The charges? Nothing is said about a miraculous cure. Rather, the accusers stir up the passions of the multitude by charging that these men, being \_\_\_\_\_, do exceedingly \_\_\_\_\_ our city by teaching \_\_\_\_\_ which are not lawful for us to receive or observe, being \_\_\_\_\_. That was enough for the multitude. They cared not what the particulars were, or what evidence there was that the accusers spoke the truth. These Jews must be taught a lesson. So the multitude \_\_\_\_\_ up together against the missionaries, clamoring for justice to be done. And the magistrates, anxious to get rid of the crowd, and not much concerned about justice for two vagabond Jews, simply ordered their attendants to tear off the missionaries' \_\_\_\_\_ and to \_\_\_\_\_ them (Acts 16:20-22).

12. After the missionaries were beaten with rods till their bared backs were covered with bleeding, inflamed welts, the magistrates ordered that they be cast into \_\_\_\_\_, charging the jailer to keep them \_\_\_\_\_. The jailer, under-

standing these strict instructions to mean that he should take extra precautions to prevent their escape, thrust the missionaries into the \_\_\_\_\_ prison (a dark dungeon) and made their feet \_\_\_\_\_ in the \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 16:22-24).

13. A victory for the devil, it must have seemed to be. For the missionaries had been emphatically rejected by the Philippians. To the great satisfaction of the devil, the cause of Christ in Philippi appeared to be lost. But what is this that is heard from the dungeon? At \_\_\_\_\_ Paul and Silas \_\_\_\_\_, and sang \_\_\_\_\_ unto God. And the \_\_\_\_\_ heard them (Acts 16:25).

### QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

1. According to II Timothy 4:11, Paul later found Mark to be very profitable to him in the ministry of the Word. Does that prove that Paul was wrong in not wanting to take Mark along on the second missionary journey?
2. The contention between Barnabas and Paul served in the end for the good of the church — though not at all to the credit of the two who were arguing. What do you think, is it true that *everything*, including all the sinful actions of men, works for the good of the church of Christ?
3. Barnabas went one way as a missionary of the gospel among the Gentiles; Paul went another way as a missionary of the gospel. The rest of the book of Acts follows the work of Paul, and says nothing at all about the work of Barnabas. Why, do you suppose, did Luke do that?
4. Paul, earlier, had steadfastly refused to circumcise Titus (see Gal. 2:3-5). He was, however, willing to circumcise Timothy in Lystra “because of the Jews which were in those quarters” (Acts 16:3). Paul did not change his position. The circumstances were different. Do you understand what that difference was?
5. Paul received a vision directing him to go to Macedonia. Today there are no visions or dreams in which such instructions are given. Do missionaries and churches now determine for themselves where to preach, or does Christ still today direct the course of the preaching of the gospel?
6. Acts 16:8 says concerning the missionary party that “they” came to Troas. Verse 10 states that “we” endeavored to go into Macedonia. Why, do you suppose, did the writer make that change in the personal pronoun at this point in his story?
7. What is there in Acts 16:13 that would suggest that there must have been few Jews living in Philippi?
8. What proof do you find in Acts 16:14 that the fruit of the preaching is a work of the sovereign God?
9. We read in Acts 16:15 that Lydia “constrained” the missionary party to be guests in her house while they worked in Philippi. The idea seems to be that there was at first a reluctance on Paul’s part to accept the invitation. Does I Corinthians 9:18, 19 give you some clue as to why that might have been?
10. Why were people in Philippi willing to pay money to have their fortunes told by the girl possessed with a spirit of divination? How do you account for the fact that the divining spirit in the girl, as well as today’s psychics, can sometimes make accurate predictions? What should our attitude be towards all the different fortune-tellings that are still practiced in our “enlightened” society?
11. Why would the spirit of divination be alarmed at the arrival of the missionaries in Philippi? Why, if he were of a mind to *oppose* the work of the missionaries, would the spirit cause the girl to follow them and to shout the *truth* concerning them (see Acts 16:17)?
12. Why did the masters of the slave-girl, in bringing charges against Paul and Silas before the magistrates, say nothing about the miraculous cure? What may have been the purpose of their accusers in noting that the two missionaries were *Jews* (Acts 16:20, 21)?
13. Why were the magistrates willing simply to order punishment and imprisonment without conducting a fair trial, which Roman law required?