

Paul's Second Journey **decide whether to use Jesus the Messiah or Christ and correct thru-out**

Scripture Passage: Acts 15:36-18:22

Memory Verse: Acts 18:9 One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Keep on speaking. Don't be silent."

Beliefs:

Actions:

Materials

*additional passage versions
& reference passages are
included at the end of the
lesson plan

maps
map markers for each group

Main Teaching Passage: Acts 15:36-18:22

Paul and Barnabas Do Not Agree

15:36 Some time later Paul spoke to Barnabas. "Let's go back to all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord," he said. "Let's visit the believers and see how they are doing." 37 Barnabas wanted to take John Mark with them. 38 But Paul didn't think it was wise to take him. Mark had deserted them in Pamphylia. He hadn't continued with them in their work. 39 Barnabas and Paul strongly disagreed with each other. So they went their separate ways. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus. 40 But Paul chose Silas. The believers asked the Lord to give his grace to Paul and Silas as they went. 41 Paul traveled through Syria and Cilicia. He gave strength to the churches there.

Timothy Joins Paul and Silas

16 Paul came to Derbe. Then he went on to Lystra. A believer named Timothy lived there. His mother was Jewish and a believer. His father was a Greek. 2 The believers at Lystra and Iconium said good things about Timothy. 3 Paul wanted to take him along on the journey. So he circumcised Timothy because of the Jews who lived in that area. They all knew that Timothy's father was a Greek. 4 Paul and his companions traveled from town to town. They reported what the apostles and elders in Jerusalem had decided. The people were supposed to obey what was in the report. 5 So the churches were made strong in the faith. The number of believers grew every day.

Paul's Vision of the Man From Macedonia

6 Paul and his companions traveled all through the area of Phrygia and Galatia. The Holy Spirit had kept them from preaching the word in Asia Minor. 7 They came to the border of Mysia. From there they tried to enter Bithynia. But the Spirit of Jesus would not let them. 8 So they passed by Mysia. Then they went down to Troas. 9 During the night Paul had a vision. He saw a man from Macedonia standing and begging him. "Come over to Macedonia!" the man said. "Help us!" 10 After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia. We decided that God had called us to preach the good news there.

Lydia Becomes a Believer in Philippi

11 At Troas we got into a boat. We sailed straight for Samothrace. The next day we went on to Neapolis. 12 From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony. It is an important city in that part of Macedonia. We stayed there several days.

13 On the Sabbath day we went outside the city gate. We walked down to the river. There we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered together. 14 One of the women listening was from the city of Thyatira. Her name was Lydia, and her business was selling purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to accept Paul's message. 15 She and her family were baptized. Then she invited us to her home. "Do you consider me a believer in the Lord?" she asked. "If you do, come and stay at my house." She succeeded in getting us to go home with her.

Paul and Silas Are Thrown Into Prison

16 One day we were going to the place of prayer. On the way we were met by a female slave. She had a spirit that helped her tell people what was going to happen. She earned a lot of money for her owners by doing this. 17 She followed Paul and the rest of us around. She shouted, "These men serve the Most High God. They are telling you how to be saved." 18 She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became upset. Turning around, he spoke to the spirit that was in her. "In the name of Jesus Christ," he said, "I command you to come out of her!" At that very moment the spirit left the woman.

19 Her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone. So they grabbed Paul and Silas. They dragged them into the market place to face the authorities. 20 They brought them to the judges. "These men are Jews," her owners said. "They are making trouble in our city. 21 They are suggesting practices that are against Roman law. These are practices we can't accept or take part in."

22 The crowd joined the attack against Paul and Silas. The judges ordered that Paul and Silas be stripped and beaten with rods. 23 They were whipped without mercy. Then they were thrown into prison. The jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. 24 When he received these orders, he put Paul and Silas deep inside the prison. He fastened their feet so they couldn't get away.

25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying. They were also singing hymns to God. The other prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was a powerful earthquake. It shook the prison from top to bottom. All at once the prison doors flew open. Everyone's chains came loose. 27 The jailer woke up. He saw that the prison doors were open. He pulled out his sword and was going to kill himself. He thought the prisoners had escaped. 28 "Don't harm yourself!" Paul shouted. "We are all here!"

29 The jailer called out for some lights. He rushed in, shaking with fear. He fell down in front of Paul and Silas. 30 Then he brought them out. He asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus. Then you and everyone living in your house will be saved." 32 They spoke the word of the Lord to him. They also spoke to all the others in his house. 33 At that hour of the night, the jailer took Paul and Silas and washed their wounds. Right away he and everyone who lived with him were baptized. 34 The jailer brought them into

his house. He set a meal in front of them. He and everyone who lived with him were filled with joy. They had become believers in God.

35 Early in the morning the judges sent their officers to the jailer. They ordered him, "Let those men go." 36 The jailer told Paul, "The judges have ordered me to set you and Silas free. You can leave now. Go in peace."

37 But Paul replied to the officers. "They beat us in public," he said. "We weren't given a trial. And we are Roman citizens! They threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and personally lead us out."

38 The officers reported this to the judges. When the judges heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they became afraid. 39 So they came and said they were sorry. They led them out of the prison. Then they asked them to leave the city. 40 After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house. There they met with the brothers and sisters. They told them to be brave. Then they left.

Paul and Silas Arrive in Thessalonica

17 Paul and those traveling with him passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia. They came to Thessalonica. A Jewish synagogue was there. 2 Paul went into the synagogue as he usually did. For three Sabbath days in a row he talked with the Jews about the Scriptures. 3 He explained and proved that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am telling you about is the Messiah!" he said. 4 His words won over some of the Jews. They joined Paul and Silas. A large number of Greeks who worshiped God joined them too. So did quite a few important women.

5 But other Jews were jealous. So they rounded up some evil people from the market place. Forming a crowd, they started all kinds of trouble in the city. The Jews rushed to Jason's house. They were looking for Paul and Silas. They wanted to bring them out to the crowd. 6 But they couldn't find them. So they dragged Jason and some other believers to the city officials. "These men have caused trouble all over the world," they shouted. "Now they have come here. 7 Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all disobeying Caesar's commands. They say there is another king. He is called Jesus." 8 When the crowd and the city officials heard this, they became very upset. 9 They made Jason and the others give them money. The officials did this to make sure they would return to the court. Then they let Jason and the others go.

Paul and Silas Are Sent to Berea

10 As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. When they arrived, they went to the Jewish synagogue. 11 The Berean Jews were very glad to receive Paul's message. They studied the Scriptures carefully every day. They wanted to see if what Paul said was true. So they were more noble than the Thessalonian Jews. 12 Because of this, many of the Berean Jews believed. A number of important Greek women also became believers. And so did many Greek men.

13 But the Jews in Thessalonica found out that Paul was preaching God's word in Berea. So some of them went there too. They stirred up the crowds and got them all worked up. 14 Right away the believers sent Paul to the coast. But Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea. 15 The believers who went with Paul took him to Athens. Then they returned with orders that Silas and Timothy were supposed to join him as soon as they could.

Paul Preaches in Athens

16 Paul was waiting for Silas and Timothy in Athens. He was very upset to see that the city was full of statues of gods. 17 So he went to the synagogue. There he talked both with Jews and with Greeks who worshiped God. Each day he spoke with anyone who happened to be in the market place. 18 A group of Epicurean and Stoic thinkers began to argue with him. Some of them asked, "What is this fellow chattering about?" Others said, "He seems to be telling us about gods we've never heard of." They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus. He was telling them that Jesus had risen from the dead. 19 They took him to a meeting of the Areopagus. There they said to him, "What is this new teaching you're giving us? 20 You have some strange ideas we've never heard before. We would like to know what they mean." 21 All the people of Athens spent their time talking about and listening to the latest ideas. People from other lands who lived there did the same.

22 Then Paul stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus. He said, "People of Athens! I see that you are very religious in every way. 23 As I walked around, I looked carefully at the things you worship. I even found an altar with an inscription to an unknown god written on it. So you don't know what you are worshiping. Now I am going to tell you about this 'unknown god.'

24 "He is the God who made the world. He also made everything in it. He is the Lord of heaven and earth. He doesn't live in temples built by human hands. 25 He is not served by human hands. He doesn't need anything. Instead, he himself gives life and breath to all people. He also gives them everything else they have. 26 From one man he made all the people of the world. Now they live all over the earth. He decided exactly when they should live. And he decided exactly where they should live. 27 God did this so that people would seek him. And perhaps they would reach out for him and find him. They would find him even though he is not far from any of us. 28 'In him we live and move and exist.' As some of your own poets have also said, 'We are his children.'

29 "Yes, we are God's children. So we shouldn't think that God is made out of gold or silver or stone. He isn't a statue planned and made by clever people. 30 In the past, God didn't judge people for what they didn't know. But now he commands all people everywhere to turn away from their sins. 31 He has set a day when he will judge the world fairly. He has appointed a man to be its judge. God has proved this to everyone by raising that man from the dead."

32 They heard Paul talk about the dead being raised. Some of them made fun of this idea. But others said, "We want to hear you speak about this again." 33 So Paul left the meeting of the Areopagus. 34 Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed in Jesus. Dionysius was one of them. He was a member of the Areopagus. A woman named Damaris also became a believer. And so did some others.

Paul Goes to Corinth

18 After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. 2 There he met a Jew named Aquila, who was a native of Pontus. Aquila had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla. The emperor Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see Aquila and Priscilla. 3 They were tentmakers, just as he was. So he stayed and worked with them. 4 Every Sabbath day he went to the synagogue. He was trying to get both Jews and Greeks to believe in the Lord.

5 Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia. Then Paul spent all his time preaching. He was a witness to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. 6 But they opposed Paul. They treated him badly. So he shook out his clothes in protest. Then he said to them, "God's judgment against you will be your own fault! Don't blame me for it! From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

7 Then Paul left the synagogue and went to the house next door. It was the house of Titius Justus, a man who worshiped God. 8 Crispus was the synagogue leader. He and everyone living in his house came to believe in the Lord. Many others who lived in Corinth heard Paul. They too believed and were baptized.

9 One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Keep on speaking. Don't be silent. 10 I am with you. No one will attack you and harm you. I have many people in this city." 11 So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half. He taught them God's word.

12 At that time Gallio was governor of Achaia. The Jews of Corinth got together and attacked Paul. They brought him into court. 13 They made a charge against Paul. They said, "This man is talking people into worshiping God in wrong ways. Those ways are against the law."

14 Paul was about to give reasons for his actions. But just then Gallio spoke to them. He said, "You Jews don't claim that Paul has committed a great or small crime. If you did, it would make sense for me to listen to you. 15 But this is about your own law. It is a question of words and names. Settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things." 16 So he made them leave. 17 Then the crowd there turned against Sosthenes, the synagogue leader. They beat him up in front of the governor. But Gallio didn't care at all.

Priscilla and Aquila Teach Apollos

18 Paul stayed in Corinth for some time. Then he left the brothers and sisters and sailed for Syria. Priscilla and Aquila went with him. Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cenchreae. He did this because he had made a promise to God. 19 They arrived at Ephesus. There Paul said goodbye to Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and talked with the Jews. 20 The Jews asked him to spend more time with them. But he said no. 21 As he left, he made them a promise. "If God wants me to," he said, "I will come back." Then he sailed from Ephesus. 22 When he landed at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem. There he greeted the church. He then went down to Antioch.

Large Group Worship - 15 minutes

2 songs as closely related in theme as possible

- Family Service Project Info
- Small Group Challenge: Raise your hand if you worked on your verse this week and you know it in your heart!!
 - Awesome! I'm excited to find out how many people learned it this week!!! Be sure to update the graph in your room.
- Dismiss to small groups.

Opening Illustration - 5 minutes: Telephone

- Have all kiddos who want to play line up super fast, elbows touching elbows. (so they aren't right next to each other.) Elbows down.

- Rules:
 - the sentence can only be said ONE TIME to each player - no repeats
 - the speaker WHISPERS what they heard to the listener
 - the listener becomes the speaker
 - the final listeners says what they heard Out Loud so everyone can enjoy how garbled the message got
- Leader speaks the original message to the line leader: God's message is the most important message.
- Say - That was some silliness! Let's think about why Paul felt it was important to go to other places to share the Good News of Jesus. What are your thoughts? *accept answers*
 - Ask - Do you think it was always easy for Paul to go new places? *accept answers*
 - Ask - How would you feel if you were dealing with the things Paul did? *accept answers*
 - Say - Let's be thinking about this as we hear more about Paul's Journey.

Teaching

- Review background of the book of Acts
 - Who wrote it: Luke
 - Who was it for: Theophilus & other Christians who would read it
 - What was it about: living life as a Christian without Jesus, but with the Holy Spirit
- Review last week's lesson:
 - Ask - Who can tell me super quickly about Paul?
 - Saul, Jew, formerly hater of Christians because didn't believe Jesus was the Messiah, super educated, light on the road/Jesus, Ananias, became a Christian, God had a big God Job for him
 - Who did Paul travel with on his first Journey? *Barnabas*
 - Can you tell me what happened in a couple of the different cities? *people believed in Jesus, Jews chased them out of town, kicked dust from sandals, got stoned, thought Barnabas was Zeus, ...*

PreK - 1st Grade

- Give children something to put on the map to mark each of the cities where Paul stopped.
- Have them add it as you get to that location.

2nd Grade - 5th Grade

- Use a main classroom map as well as a smaller map for each child to mark as you teach.

- Say - Last week we left Saul and Barnabas in Antioch. Let's see where they are now. It's been a couple of years and some decisions have been made about what Jewish laws the Gentile Christians should have to follow and which ones they shouldn't. (Acts 15:1-35)
- Ask - Who did Paul travel with on his first Journey? *Barnabas, John Mark for a little while*
- Say - (Acts 15:36-40) Paul talks to Barnie about heading out to visit the cities and churches where they went the first time to teach for a bit and make sure they're all doing ok. Barnie is all for it and wants John Mark to go too. Paul says no because John Mark ditched during the last trip and it ticked him off. Finally, Barnie decides he and John Mark will go Cyprus and Paul will go visit the first churches with another leader, Silas. Just like last time the Believers in the church at **Antioch** prayed for them and sent them on their way.

- Say - (Acts 15:41) This time Paul and Silas go **by land** instead of by boat. They head north then west. It's a much longer trip. Their first stop is in **Tarsus in Cilicia** where there has been a church for a while. They encourage the Believers there and keep going.
- (Acts 16:1-5) Next they go **through Derbe and on to Lystra** where they meet Timothy. Timothy is a young believer who Paul sees the ability to be a great missionary inside of. He checks with some of the local church leaders and they agree so Paul takes Timothy with he and Silas on the rest of his Journey.
- (Acts 16:6-8) Paul and his friends want to go into Asia to tell the people about Jesus the Messiah, but the Holy Spirit tells them no. We can see from the cities they went to they kept near the border, but God told them no over and over.
- (Acts 16:9-10) While they were in Troas Paul received instructions from God through a vision that they needed to go help the people learn about Jesus in Macedonia, another country.
 - (Acts 16:11-12) They immediately got ready and headed out by ship. When they landed in **Samothrace** they kept going by foot to **Nepalis** and then into **Philippi**. It was a big city run by the Romans in Macedonia. They stayed there for a little while.
 - (Acts 16:13-15) One of the days they were in **Philippi** they went down to the river where they'd heard a group of Believers would meet to talk about Jesus and pray. Paul taught the group of ladies who had gathered. One was a business woman named Lydia. She hadn't grown up knowing about God or Jesus but had learned to love God. She was very interested to learn more about Jesus the Messiah. She made the decision to believe in Jesus and be baptized. Then, she invited them to stay at her house.
 - (Acts 16:16-40) Another thing that happened while they were in Philippi is kind of funny and kind of scary. A lady had a spirit inside her who could tell the future. Some men had bought her as their slave and used her to tell peoples fortunes and made lots of money from it. Well, she had been following Paul, Silas, and the others with them around for several days saying, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved."
 - This seems pretty cool at first, right? But lets play a game. Tell the person sitting next to you something you're really good at (riding a bike, fishing, hockey, drawing, etc). Now, take turns saying over and over again the thing they are good at. (Jamie is a great artist. Molly is a good singer. Jamie is a great artist. Molly is a good singer.) Get's annoying, doesn't it?!
 - Paul gets really annoyed after several days of this. He turns around, looks at the girl and says to the spirit in her, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" And the spirit left!!
 - That's good for the lady since the guys can't use her that way any more, but that's really bad for the men who owned her and made money from the spirit. How come? *she can't tell fortunes any more*
 - The men get really mad and take Paul and Silas to the authorities and tell the ones in charge that Paul and Silas are breaking laws and making trouble. The crowd agrees with them! The authorities decide to have Paul and Silas stripped and beaten with rods then thrown into prison. Whoa! And they give specific instructions to the guards to watch them closely.
 - The guards put them in an inside cell (no windows or way to the outside) and in stocks (lock up their hands and feet so they can't move around). How would you feel if you'd been teaching about Jesus all this time, cast out a spirit, and you get beat up and thrown in jail? *accept answers*
 - Paul and Silas spend their time praying and singing to God! And guess who was listening - all the other prisoners and guards! Around midnight there was an earthquake that knocked open the cell doors and knocked their chains off! The prison guard had been knocked unconscious or something because when he woke up he freaked out assuming everyone escaped and he'd be in HUGE trouble. Paul shouted, "It's ok! We're all here!" The guard got

torches lit again and realized God had opened the jail! He fell before Paul and Silas and asked how to be saved!

- The guard took them home and cleaned their wounds. Paul and Silas told his family and servants about Jesus. They all believed and were baptized! Then they went BACK to the jail.
- The next morning the officials send messengers to the jail to say they were free to go. Paul said, "No way! You made a big deal out of arresting us and now you want to just sneak us out? We're Romans, you can't treat us like that!" The authorities had not known they were Romans, they thought they were nobodies from Israel so now they were a little nervous because they hadn't followed the laws correctly. The leaders came and let them out of prison. Paul and Silas went back to Lydia's house, taught some more, and then moved on in their journey.
- (Acts 17:1-9) They left Philippi, went through Amphiboles and Apollonia to **Thessalonica**. There was a Jewish Synagogue there. Like in the other cities some of the Jews became believers in Jesus the Messiah, as did many of the Gentiles, including many of the women leaders in town, and, as usual, a few of the Jews got angry. The angry ones started riot and went to one of the Believers house, Jason, because that's where Paul had been staying. They didn't find Paul or Silas so they dragged Jason & some other Believers who were there, out. They took them to the authorities and said the same things the angry people in the last city had. Can you remember what it was? *causing trouble breaking our customs and laws*
 - This time the authorities made Jason and others pay a fine and let them go.
- (Acts 17:10-15) As soon as it was night the Believers snuck Paul and Silas out of town and they went on to **Berea**. Where do you think the first place they went to teach was? *jewish synagogue*
 - Yep! How do you think the people responded? *accept answers*
 - This time was a little different. Lots of the Jews believed and so did many of the Greeks! Even a lot of the Greek leaders - yay! BUT, when the Jewish leaders from Thessalonica heard so many of the Berean Jews were becoming Believers THEY were mad and showed up in town to cause problems. Erg!
 - The Believers immediately **sent Paul by ship to Athens** while **Silas & Timothy stayed** to continue teaching. They had decided Silas and Tim would rejoin him as soon as they could.
- (Acts 17:16-34) Paul arrived in Athens and got stressed out because he noticed something about their culture. They had idols, statues of gods to worship, everywhere. They believed in lots of small gods who each had something they were in charge of - this is what you study when you learn about Greek mythology - think the Percy Jackson book series. They were very 'religious' and highly educated as well as intellectual. In fact they prized having smart conversations and learning new things above almost anything else. Paul decided to be smart and go from that angle rather than yelling at them for not believing in Jesus the Son of the One True God. Remember, Paul was a Jew who was very highly educated. He was also a Roman citizen. He knew how to talk with them and get them to listen. So he did. He spoke at the synagogues to those who already believed in God just like he always did as well as in the marketplaces, like at coffeeshops.
 - Many Greeks would listen to him and think about what he said. As always, he made a few upset because he was teaching about "foreign gods." These took him to Areopagus. It was a where their high court met, near the temples of their gods, but also where they listen to guest speakers talk about things. So he was kind of on trial and kind of taken seriously as having new information.

Meta-Narrative Link

- He complimented them on being very religious and noted that they already knew they were missing information because they had an altar for worshipping “the unknown god.” Paul said he would tell them all they needed to know about the real God and did so.
- When Paul told them about Jesus’s resurrection from the dead, as usual, some were ugly and some were interested. He was allowed to leave, so for once didn’t get beaten up or arrested! Some of the listeners became Believers and some did not.
- (Acts 18:1-18) After this Paul left Athens and went to **Corinth**. Here he meets a really cool couple who are also Believers. He lived with them because they were tentmakers and so was he. That way he could help earn money to pay for him to live there. Did you know Paul had training to do a job other than be a missionary?! *accept answers*
- Guess what he did to talk with others about Jesus. *went to the synagogue on the Sabbath to teach the Jews and Greeks*
- He worked on tents and spoke on the Sabbath until Silas and Timothy got to town. After that he focused on preaching and telling the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. After a while they got to just being ugly to him. Do you remember what he did on his first journey to show that he wasn’t responsible for what others chose to believe? *shook the dust off his sandals*
- He did almost the same thing again. This time he shook the dust out of his robe and said, “Fine! You believe wrong if you want to. I’m going to talk with the Gentiles!” and he went next-door where Titius Justus lived and was a gentile Believer. While he taught there the synagogue leader became a Believer and was baptized as did many others.
- One night during this time God came to Paul in a vision. Do you remember the first vision Paul had? *go to Macedonia (Holy Spirit kept him from going to Asia)*
 - This time God said not to worry about being arrested or killed but to keep on talking! God said that Paul would be protected because God had so many Believers in Corinth.
 - Paul stayed there for about a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.
 - At one point the Jews of Corinth did attack Paul and take him to the authorities but the man in charge told them it was none of his business because he wasn’t a Jew. He kicked them out of court. The crowd actually got mad at the new synagogue leader and beat him up instead of Paul.
- After Paul felt his was finished in Corinth he **sailed to Ephesus with Priscilla and Aquila**. He did his usual routine of going into the synagogue to teach. It went really well and they asked him to stay longer, but he said no. Paul told them he’d come back if God wanted him to.
- Paul left Priscilla and Aquila in Ephesus and they helped the church there. Paul **sailed from Ephesus to Caesarea then walked to Jerusalem** where he checked on the Believers there. Then he finally headed home to **Antioch**.
- Ask - How long do you think this 2nd journey of Paul’s took? *accept answers*
 - Believe it or not scholars think this trip was about as long as the first one, 2-3 years.
- Say - Wow! That’s a lot of walking and sailing!! Let’s recap super fast by looking at our map markers.
 - Paul & Barnie fuss and go their separate ways.
 - Paul walks north with Silas, picks up Timothy and things go great until they want to go into Asia and the Holy Spirit tells them no.
 - So they keep going until Paul has a dream that he needs to go to Macedonia.
 - They immediately set sail and in a few days they get to Philippi. They make friends with Lydia, have good success sharing about Jesus the Messiah, but, of course, make some people mad so they get arrested. There’s an earthquake that sets them free, and the guard becomes a Believer.
 - They leave Philippi and get to Thessalonica where he preaches at the synagogue. Some people become Believers, some get angry. The Jewish leaders go to arrest him, he isn’t home so

they arrest Jason and the guys who are there. The authorities charge the guys a fine and let them go. The Believers sneak Paul & friends out of town.

- They go to Berea where they have HUGE success with both the Jews and the Gentiles until the angry Jews from Thessalonica show up. The Believers sneak Paul onto a ship while Silas and Timothy stay.
- Paul arrives in Athens, is stressed out about all the false gods they worship, teaches them, and some believe.
- Paul moves on to Corinth where he works with Aquila and Priscilla as a tentmaker and preaches only on the Sabbath until Silas & Tim get into town. Then he preaches a whole lot more. Lots of people believe. Paul has another vision that tells him not to worry about angry Jews but to keep on talking! He stays in Corinth a long time.
- Paul finally leaves and sails to Ephesus. Aquila and Priscilla go with him too. The people in Ephesus are excited to hear and learn from him. They even ask him to stay longer, he says not now.
- Paul heads back home stopping in Jerusalem to say hi to the Believers there.
- Phew!

Scripture Memory

- Spend a few moments creating motions or a rhythm to go with the bible verse.
 - Session Verse:
Acts 18:9 One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision. "Don't be afraid," he said. "Keep on speaking. Don't be silent."
 - Theme Verse:
Matthew 28:19 So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Application Activities - 20 minutes:

Wrap Up

- Say - Tonight we learned all about Paul and Barnabas's second Journey to tell people, Jews and Gentiles, about Jesus the Messiah. He had visions and went to jail some more.
 - Say - Next week we will learn about Paul's third Journey.
- Be sure to send home their Family Page and Personal Study materials.

Family Component

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Personal Study

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Related Sources:

Additional Passages

Main Teaching Passage: Acts 15:36-18:22 (NIV)

15:36 Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." 37 Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, 38 but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. 39 They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, 40 but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. 41 He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

Timothy Joins Paul and Silas

16 Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. 2 The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. 3 Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. 4 As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. 5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

Paul's Vision of the Man of Macedonia

6 Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. 7 When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. 8 So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. 9 During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Lydia's Conversion in Philippi

11 From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. 12 From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district[a] of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

13 On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. 14 One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. 15 When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

Paul and Silas in Prison

16 Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. 17 She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved." 18 She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.

19 When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. 20 They brought them before the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar 21 by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice."

22 The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. 23 After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. 24 When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.

25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose. 27 The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

29 The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. 33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. 34 The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

35 When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: "Release those men." 36 The jailer told Paul, "The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace."

37 But Paul said to the officers: "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out."

38 The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. 39 They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. 40 After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them. Then they left.

In Thessalonica

17 When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. 2 As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah," he said. 4 Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women.

5 But other Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd.[b] 6 But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, 7 and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus." 8 When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. 9 Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.

In Berea

10 As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. 11 Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. 12 As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.

13 But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, some of them went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up. 14 The believers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. 15 Those who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

In Athens

16 While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. 17 So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. 18 A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babbler trying to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. 19 Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? 20 You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean." 21 (All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.)

22 Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: to an unknown god. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

24 "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. 25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. 26 From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. 27 God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 28 'For in him we live and move and have our being.'^[c] As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'^[d]

29 "Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. 30 In the past God overlooked

such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. 31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead.”

32 When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We want to hear you again on this subject.” 33 At that, Paul left the Council. 34 Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

In Corinth

18 After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. 2 There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, 3 and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. 4 Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks.

5 When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. 6 But when they opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, “Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.”

7 Then Paul left the synagogue and went next door to the house of Titius Justus, a worshiper of God. 8 Crispus, the synagogue leader, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard Paul believed and were baptized.

9 One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: “Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. 10 For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city.” 11 So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

12 While Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews of Corinth made a united attack on Paul and brought him to the place of judgment. 13 “This man,” they charged, “is persuading the people to worship God in ways contrary to the law.”

14 Just as Paul was about to speak, Gallio said to them, “If you Jews were making a complaint about some misdemeanor or serious crime, it would be reasonable for me to listen to you. 15 But since it involves questions about words and names and your own law—settle the matter yourselves. I will not be a judge of such things.” 16 So he drove them off. 17 Then the crowd there turned on Sosthenes the synagogue leader and beat him in front of the proconsul; and Gallio showed no concern whatever.

Priscilla, Aquila and Apollos

18 Paul stayed on in Corinth for some time. Then he left the brothers and sisters and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. Before he sailed, he had his hair cut off at Cenchreae because of a vow he had taken. 19 They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. 20 When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined. 21 But as he left, he promised, “I will come back if it is God’s will.” Then he set sail from Ephesus. 22 When he landed at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church and then went down to Antioch.

Main Teaching Passage: Acts 15:36-18:22 (MSG)

15:36 After a few days of this, Paul said to Barnabas, "Let's go back and visit all our friends in each of the towns where we preached the Word of God. Let's see how they're doing."

37-41 Barnabas wanted to take John along, the John nicknamed Mark. But Paul wouldn't have him; he wasn't about to take along a quitter who, as soon as the going got tough, had jumped ship on them in Pamphylia. Tempers flared, and they ended up going their separate ways: Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus; Paul chose Silas and, offered up by their friends to the grace of the Master, went to Syria and Cilicia to build up muscle and sinew in those congregations.

A Dream Gave Paul His Map

16 1-3 Paul came first to Derbe, then Lystra. He found a disciple there by the name of Timothy, son of a devout Jewish mother and Greek father. Friends in Lystra and Iconium all said what a fine young man he was. Paul wanted to recruit him for their mission, but first took him aside and circumcised him so he wouldn't offend the Jews who lived in those parts. They all knew that his father was Greek.

4-5 As they traveled from town to town, they presented the simple guidelines the Jerusalem apostles and leaders had come up with. That turned out to be most helpful. Day after day the congregations became stronger in faith and larger in size.

6-8 They went to Phrygia, and then on through the region of Galatia. Their plan was to turn west into Asia province, but the Holy Spirit blocked that route. So they went to Mysia and tried to go north to Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus wouldn't let them go there either. Proceeding on through Mysia, they went down to the seaport Troas.

9-10 That night Paul had a dream: A Macedonian stood on the far shore and called across the sea, "Come over to Macedonia and help us!" The dream gave Paul his map. We went to work at once getting things ready to cross over to Macedonia. All the pieces had come together. We knew now for sure that God had called us to preach the good news to the Europeans.

11-12 Putting out from the harbor at Troas, we made a straight run for Samothrace. The next day we tied up at New City and walked from there to Philippi, the main city in that part of Macedonia and, even more importantly, a Roman colony. We lingered there several days.

13-14 On the Sabbath, we left the city and went down along the river where we had heard there was to be a prayer meeting. We took our place with the women who had gathered there and talked with them. One woman, Lydia, was from Thyatira and a dealer in expensive textiles, known to be a God-fearing woman. As she listened with intensity to what was being said, the Master gave her a trusting heart—and she believed!

15 After she was baptized, along with everyone in her household, she said in a surge of hospitality, "If you're confident that I'm in this with you and believe in the Master truly, come home with me and be my guests." We hesitated, but she wouldn't take no for an answer.

Beat Up and Thrown in Jail

16-18 One day, on our way to the place of prayer, a slave girl ran into us. She was a psychic and, with her fortunetelling, made a lot of money for the people who owned her. She started following Paul around, calling everyone's attention to us by yelling out, "These men are working for the Most High God. They're laying out the road of salvation for you!" She did this for a number of days until Paul, finally fed up with her, turned and commanded the spirit that possessed her, "Out! In the name of Jesus Christ, get out of her!" And it was gone, just like that.

19-22 When her owners saw that their lucrative little business was suddenly bankrupt, they went after Paul and Silas, roughed them up and dragged them into the market square. Then the police arrested them and pulled them into a court with the accusation, "These men are disturbing the peace—dangerous Jewish agitators subverting our Roman law and order." By this time the crowd had turned into a restless mob out for blood.

22-24 The judges went along with the mob, had Paul and Silas's clothes ripped off and ordered a public beating. After beating them black-and-blue, they threw them into jail, telling the jail-keeper to put them under heavy guard so there would be no chance of escape. He did just that—threw them into the maximum security cell in the jail and clamped leg irons on them.

25-26 Along about midnight, Paul and Silas were at prayer and singing a robust hymn to God. The other prisoners couldn't believe their ears. Then, without warning, a huge earthquake! The jailhouse tottered, every door flew open, all the prisoners were loose.

27-28 Startled from sleep, the jailer saw all the doors swinging loose on their hinges. Assuming that all the prisoners had escaped, he pulled out his sword and was about to do himself in, figuring he was as good as dead anyway, when Paul stopped him: "Don't do that! We're all still here! Nobody's run away!"

29-31 The jailer got a torch and ran inside. Badly shaken, he collapsed in front of Paul and Silas. He led them out of the jail and asked, "Sirs, what do I have to do to be saved, to really live?" They said, "Put your entire trust in the Master Jesus. Then you'll live as you were meant to live—and everyone in your house included!"

32-34 They went on to spell out in detail the story of the Master—the entire family got in on this part. They never did get to bed that night. The jailer made them feel at home, dressed their wounds, and then—he couldn't wait till morning!—was baptized, he and everyone in his family. There in his home, he had food set out for a festive meal. It was a night to remember: He and his entire family had put their trust in God; everyone in the house was in on the celebration.

35-36 At daybreak, the court judges sent officers with the instructions, "Release these men." The jailer gave Paul the message, "The judges sent word that you're free to go on your way. Congratulations! Go in peace!"

37 But Paul wouldn't budge. He told the officers, "They beat us up in public and threw us in jail, Roman citizens in good standing! And now they want to get us out of the way on the sly without anyone knowing? Nothing doing! If they want us out of here, let them come themselves and lead us out in broad daylight."

38-40 When the officers reported this, the judges panicked. They had no idea that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens. They hurried over and apologized, personally escorted them from the jail, and then asked them if they wouldn't please leave the city. Walking out of the jail, Paul and

Silas went straight to Lydia's house, saw their friends again, encouraged them in the faith, and only then went on their way.

Thessalonica

17 1-3 They took the road south through Amphipolis and Apollonia to Thessalonica, where there was a community of Jews. Paul went to their meeting place, as he usually did when he came to a town, and for three Sabbaths running he preached to them from the Scriptures. He opened up the texts so they understood what they'd been reading all their lives: that the Messiah absolutely had to be put to death and raised from the dead—there were no other options—and that “this Jesus I'm introducing you to is that Messiah.”

4-5 Some of them were won over and joined ranks with Paul and Silas, among them a great many God-fearing Greeks and a considerable number of women from the aristocracy. But the hard-line Jews became furious over the conversions. Mad with jealousy, they rounded up a bunch of brawlers off the streets and soon had an ugly mob terrorizing the city as they hunted down Paul and Silas.

5-7 They broke into Jason's house, thinking that Paul and Silas were there. When they couldn't find them, they collared Jason and his friends instead and dragged them before the city fathers, yelling hysterically, “These people are out to destroy the world, and now they've shown up on our doorstep, attacking everything we hold dear! And Jason is hiding them, these traitors and turn-coats who say Jesus is king and Caesar is nothing!”

8-9 The city fathers and the crowd of people were totally alarmed by what they heard. They made Jason and his friends post heavy bail and let them go while they investigated the charges.

Berea

10-12 That night, under cover of darkness, their friends got Paul and Silas out of town as fast as they could. They sent them to Berea, where they again met with the Jewish community. They were treated a lot better there than in Thessalonica. The Jews received Paul's message with enthusiasm and met with him daily, examining the Scriptures to see if they supported what he said. A lot of them became believers, including many Greeks who were prominent in the community, women and men of influence.

13-15 But it wasn't long before reports got back to the Thessalonian hard-line Jews that Paul was at it again, preaching the Word of God, this time in Berea. They lost no time responding, and created a mob scene there, too. With the help of his friends, Paul gave them the slip—caught a boat and put out to sea. Silas and Timothy stayed behind. The men who helped Paul escape got him as far as Athens and left him there. Paul sent word back with them to Silas and Timothy: “Come as quickly as you can!”

Athens

16 The longer Paul waited in Athens for Silas and Timothy, the angrier he got—all those idols! The city was a junkyard of idols.

17-18 He discussed it with the Jews and other like-minded people at their meeting place. And every day he went out on the streets and talked with anyone who happened along. He got to know some of the Epicurean and Stoic intellectuals pretty well through these conversations. Some of

them dismissed him with sarcasm: "What an airhead!" But others, listening to him go on about Jesus and the resurrection, were intrigued: "That's a new slant on the gods. Tell us more."

19-21 These people got together and asked him to make a public presentation over at the Areopagus, where things were a little quieter. They said, "This is a new one on us. We've never heard anything quite like it. Where did you come up with this anyway? Explain it so we can understand." Downtown Athens was a great place for gossip. There were always people hanging around, natives and tourists alike, waiting for the latest tidbit on most anything.

22-23 So Paul took his stand in the open space at the Areopagus and laid it out for them. "It is plain to see that you Athenians take your religion seriously. When I arrived here the other day, I was fascinated with all the shrines I came across. And then I found one inscribed, to the god nobody knows. I'm here to introduce you to this God so you can worship intelligently, know who you're dealing with.

24-29 "The God who made the world and everything in it, this Master of sky and land, doesn't live in custom-made shrines or need the human race to run errands for him, as if he couldn't take care of himself. He makes the creatures; the creatures don't make him. Starting from scratch, he made the entire human race and made the earth hospitable, with plenty of time and space for living so we could seek after God, and not just grope around in the dark but actually find him. He doesn't play hide-and-seek with us. He's not remote; he's near. We live and move in him, can't get away from him! One of your poets said it well: 'We're the God-created.' Well, if we are the God-created, it doesn't make a lot of sense to think we could hire a sculptor to chisel a god out of stone for us, does it?

30-31 "God overlooks it as long as you don't know any better—but that time is past. The unknown is now known, and he's calling for a radical life-change. He has set a day when the entire human race will be judged and everything set right. And he has already appointed the judge, confirming him before everyone by raising him from the dead."

32-34 At the phrase "raising him from the dead," the listeners split: Some laughed at him and walked off making jokes; others said, "Let's do this again. We want to hear more." But that was it for the day, and Paul left. There were still others, it turned out, who were convinced then and there, and stuck with Paul—among them Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris.

Corinth

18 1-4 After Athens, Paul went to Corinth. That is where he discovered Aquila, a Jew born in Pontus, and his wife, Priscilla. They had just arrived from Italy, part of the general expulsion of Jews from Rome ordered by Claudius. Paul moved in with them, and they worked together at their common trade of tentmaking. But every Sabbath he was at the meeting place, doing his best to convince both Jews and Greeks about Jesus.

5-6 When Silas and Timothy arrived from Macedonia, Paul was able to give all his time to preaching and teaching, doing everything he could to persuade the Jews that Jesus was in fact God's Messiah. But no such luck. All they did was argue contentiously and contradict him at every turn. Totally exasperated, Paul had finally had it with them and gave it up as a bad job. "Have it your way, then," he said. "You've made your bed; now lie in it. From now on I'm spending my time with the other nations."

7-8 He walked out and went to the home of Titius Justus, a God-fearing man who lived right next to the Jews' meeting place. But Paul's efforts with the Jews weren't a total loss, for Crispus, the meeting-place president, put his trust in the Master. His entire family believed with him.

8-11 In the course of listening to Paul, a great many Corinthians believed and were baptized. One night the Master spoke to Paul in a dream: "Keep it up, and don't let anyone intimidate or silence you. No matter what happens, I'm with you and no one is going to be able to hurt you. You have no idea how many people I have on my side in this city." That was all he needed to stick it out. He stayed another year and a half, faithfully teaching the Word of God to the Corinthians.

12-13 But when Gallio was governor of Achaia province, the Jews got up a campaign against Paul, hauled him into court, and filed charges: "This man is seducing people into acts of worship that are illegal."

14-16 Just as Paul was about to defend himself, Gallio interrupted and said to the Jews, "If this was a matter of criminal conduct, I would gladly hear you out. But it sounds to me like one more Jewish squabble, another of your endless hairsplitting quarrels over religion. Take care of it on your own time. I can't be bothered with this nonsense," and he cleared them out of the courtroom.

17 Now the street rabble turned on Sosthenes, the new meeting-place president, and beat him up in plain sight of the court. Gallio didn't raise a finger. He could not have cared less.

Ephesus

18 Paul stayed a while longer in Corinth, but then it was time to take leave of his friends. Saying his good-byes, he sailed for Syria, Priscilla and Aquila with him. Before boarding the ship in the harbor town of Cenchrea, he had his head shaved as part of a vow he had taken.

19-21 They landed in Ephesus, where Priscilla and Aquila got off and stayed. Paul left the ship briefly to go to the meeting place and preach to the Jews. They wanted him to stay longer, but he said he couldn't. But after saying good-bye, he promised, "I'll be back, God willing."

21-22 From Ephesus he sailed to Caesarea. He greeted the church there, and then went on to Antioch, completing the journey.

Background Passage: Acts 15:1-35 (NIRV)

(The Jerusalem Council)

15 Certain people came down from Judea to Antioch. Here is what they were teaching the believers. "Moses commanded you to be circumcised," they said. "If you aren't, you can't be saved." 2 But Paul and Barnabas didn't agree with this. They argued strongly with them. So Paul and Barnabas were appointed to go up to Jerusalem. Some other believers were chosen to go with them. They were told to ask the apostles and elders about this question. 3 The church sent them on their way. They traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria. There they told how the Gentiles had turned to God. This news made all the believers very glad. 4 When they arrived in Jerusalem, the church welcomed them. The apostles and elders welcomed them too. Then Paul and Barnabas reported everything God had done through them.

5 Some of the believers were Pharisees. They stood up and said, "The Gentiles must be circumcised. They must obey the law of Moses."

6 The apostles and elders met to consider this question. 7 After they had talked it over, Peter got up and spoke to them. "Brothers," he said, "you know that some time ago God chose me. He appointed me to take the good news to the Gentiles. He wanted them to hear the good news and believe. 8 God knows the human heart. By giving the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles, he showed that he accepted them. He did the same for them as he had done for us. 9 God showed that there is no difference between us and them. That's because he made their hearts pure because of their faith. 10 Now then, why are you trying to test God? You test him when you put a heavy load on the shoulders of Gentiles. Our people of long ago couldn't carry that load. We can't either. 11 No! We believe we are saved through the grace of our Lord Jesus. The Gentiles are saved in the same way."

12 Everyone became quiet as they listened to Barnabas and Paul. They were telling about the signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. 13 When they finished, James spoke up. "Brothers," he said, "listen to me. 14 Simon Peter has explained to us what God has now done. He has chosen some of the Gentiles to be among his very own people. 15 The prophets' words agree with that. They say,

16 " 'After this I will return
and set up again David's fallen tent.
I will rebuild what was destroyed.
I will make it what it used to be.

17 Then everyone else can look to the Lord.

This includes all the Gentiles who belong to me, says the Lord.
The Lord is the one who does these things.' (Amos 9:11,12)

18 The Lord does things that have been known from long ago.

19 "Now here is my decision. We should not make it hard for the Gentiles who are turning to God. 20 Here is what we should write to them. They must not eat food that has been made impure by being offered to statues of gods. They must not commit sexual sins. They must not eat the meat of animals that have been choked to death. And they must not drink blood. 21 These laws of Moses have been preached in every city from the earliest times. They are read out loud in the synagogues every Sabbath day."

A Letter Is Written to Gentile Believers

22 Then the apostles, the elders and the whole church decided what to do. They would choose some of their own men who were leaders among the believers. They would send them to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas. So they chose Judas Barsabbas and Silas. They were leaders among the believers. 23 Here is the letter they sent with them.

The apostles and elders, your brothers, are writing this letter.

We are sending it to the Gentile believers in Antioch, Syria and Cilicia.

Greetings.

24 We have heard that some of our people came to you and caused trouble. You were upset by what they said. But we had given them no authority to go. 25 So we all agreed to send our dear

friends Barnabas and Paul to you. We chose some other men to go with them. 26 Barnabas and Paul have put their lives in danger. They did it for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 So we are sending Judas and Silas with them. What they say will agree with this letter. 28 Here is what seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us. We will not give you a load that is too heavy. So here are a few basic rules. 29 Don't eat food that has been offered to statues of gods. Don't drink blood. Don't eat the meat of animals that have been choked to death. And don't commit sexual sins. You will do well to keep away from these things.

Farewell.

30 So the men were sent down to Antioch. There they gathered the church together. They gave the letter to them. 31 The people read it. They were glad for its message of hope. 32 Judas and Silas were prophets. They said many things to give strength and hope to the believers. 33-34 Judas and Silas stayed there for some time. Then the believers sent them away with the blessing of peace. They sent them back to those who had sent them out. 35 Paul and Barnabas remained in Antioch. There they and many others taught and preached the word of the Lord.