



Ascribed to Valentin de Boulogne
of the 17th. Century

The Life of Paul

Part 3 of 5

Paul's Second Missionary Journey

Acts chapters 15:36 - 18:22

50 - 52 AD

So far, we have made no mention of the writing of Paul's letters. None of his New Testament writings appear to have been written prior to his second missionary journey. Since none of Paul's letters include a specific date we have to do a little detective work to know when and from what location they were written. In some letters the clues are more obvious than in others.

When Paul and Silas leave Antioch to begin Paul's second missionary journey they travel north and then west around the north-eastern corner of the Mediterranean Sea. As is the case for the first journey, the account in Acts is only a brief summary. They preached wherever they were and only major places and some more dramatic events are mentioned. We must remember that Paul had previously preached in the region of Cilicia and Syria prior to 43 AD at which point Barnabas had recruited Paul to work in Antioch. It was also the region around Paul's native city of Tarsus. So Paul is quite familiar with the region where his second journey begins (Acts 15:41).

Paul and Silas eventually reach Derbe and Lystra. In Lystra Paul meets a young man named Timothy who will in due course come to play a significant role in the Church.

When Paul gets to the area of Troas he has a vision prompting him to cross the Aegean Sea into Macedonia (Greece). He does so and visits the city of Philippi. In Philippi, Paul and Silas were soon accused of upsetting the city and put in jail. During the night an earthquake frees them from their bonds but they choose not to flee. Instead, they witness to the jailkeeper who becomes a believer (Acts 16:16-40). In the morning when orders arrive from the city officials instructing the jailer to set them free Paul refuses to leave. He invokes his status as a Roman citizen and demands an apology. Since Philippi was a Roman colony and citizenship was greatly respected, the officials feared that they would be penalized for how they had treated him.

From Philippi Paul and Silas made their way to Thessalonica. Paul preached in the Jewish meeting place there, and in what was becoming a repeated pattern, the Jewish leaders stirred up the community against them (Acts 17:1-9).

They moved on to Berea where they were received more kindly but the complainants from Thessalonica soon followed them and stirred up trouble there too (Acts 17:10-15). In this record we also learn that Timothy, who was from Lystra, was travelling with them.

Another note must be made about the way events are recorded in this portion of Acts. Acts was written by Luke to be a companion piece to his Gospel. Some of these events are recorded as though the writer is actually present when they are happening (see the use of “we” beginning in Acts 16:10). It is assumed that Luke was actually accompanying Paul and Silas in this leg of their journey.

Paul left Silas and Timothy in Berea, and travelled on to the illustrious city of Athens where he was invited to address a Council called the Areopagus. Many mocked him but some actually became believers (Acts 17:16-34).

Paul’s next recorded visit was to the city of Corinth where he met a couple named Priscilla and Aquila. They had recently arrived from Italy and became strong supporters of Paul’s work. In Corinth Paul was rejoined by Silas and Timothy. After facing rejection by the Jews in Corinth, Paul directed his attention to ministering to gentiles. His work was quite successful and he stayed there for a year and a half (Acts 18:1-11).

When charges against Paul were presented to Gallio, the Roman governor, he refused to become involved and the crowd in Corinth attacked the Jewish leaders who were Paul’s accusers (Acts 18:12-17).

When Paul eventually left Corinth he was accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila. They sailed to Ephesus. Priscilla and Aquila stayed in Ephesus and Paul then boarded a ship to Caesarea in Palestine. From there Paul returned to his home base in Antioch in Syria. He arrived there in 52 AD having been away for the better part of three years.

Concerning Paul’s Letters:

It is speculated that Paul’s two letters to the Church in Thessalonica were written during the time that Paul spent in Corinth (probably 51/52 AD).

It is also proposed that Paul’s letter to the Galatians was possibly written in 52 AD when he arrived back in Antioch at the end of his second missionary journey.

This map will be helpful in tracing the places visited during Paul's second missionary journey.

