

# The Second Missionary Trip

Acts 15:36-40 may suggest Paul and Barnabas began their secondary missionary journey as a human plan: *“Then after some days Paul said to Barnabas, ‘Let us now go back and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they are doing.’ Now Barnabas was determined to take with them John called Mark. But Paul insisted that they should not take with them the one who had departed from them in Pamphylia, and had not gone with them to the work. Then the contention became so sharp that they parted from one another. And so Barnabas took Mark and sailed to Cyprus; but Paul chose Silas and departed, being commended by the brethren to the grace of God. And he went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.”*

The fact that Acts 15:37-40 states Paul and Barnabas had a fight and went their separate ways, is possible additional proof of the fact that some aspects of the original planning of this second missionary trip were not inspired by the Holy Spirit.

But despite this, Paul’s second missionary journey was originally a result of the inspiration and guidance of the Holy Spirit in the sense that God had years before told Paul to preach and teach about Jesus Christ to non-Jews in many places. Acts 9:15 records what God revealed earlier to Ananias about Paul: *“But the Lord said to him, ‘Go, for he a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel.”*

Acts 22:21, Romans 1:1-6, Galatians 1:15, 2:7, Ephesians 3:7-8, 1 Timothy 2:7 and 2 Timothy 2:10-11 also reveal Paul knew God had called him to preach the Gospel and teach the Word of God to non-Jews in many lands.

## Guidance about where to minister

After Paul began his second missionary journey, God gave him specific guidance about where to preach and not preach. Acts 16:6-7 records an example of God the Holy Spirit supernaturally guiding Paul and his companions in their ministry. These verses do not refer solely to God sovereignly closing doors of opportunity in natural circumstances in relation to preaching the Gospel in Asia Minor and Bithynia. 1 Thessalonians 2:17-18 reveals that not only God but also Satan can close doors in human circumstances: *“But we, brethren, having been taken away from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavored more eagerly to see your face with great desire. Therefore we wanted to come to you - even I, Paul, time and again - but Satan hindered us.”* So without a revelation from the Holy Spirit, Paul would not have known whether it was God or Satan closing these doors in relation to preaching in Asia Minor and Bithynia.

Acts 16:6-7 indicates the Holy Spirit twice gave Paul supernatural guidance that at that time He did not want Paul to preach in two large areas – the province of Asia and the land of Bithynia. Later Paul went to preach in the city of Ephesus in the province of Asia (see Acts 18:18-21, 19:1-41 and 1 Corinthians 16:8-9), but there is no record in the Bible of Paul going to preach in Bithynia at any later time.

When Paul and Silas arrived at Troas, God gave Paul supernatural guidance that it was His specific will they go to Macedonia. Acts 16:9-10 records: *“And a vision appeared to Paul*

*in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them."*

Acts 16:11-12 records Paul obeyed this guidance. Observe, however, that God supernaturally guided Paul to go to the province of Macedonia but did not specify which cities or places in Macedonia to go first, second and so on. So it is possible that either human planning by Paul or the natural circumstance of to which place the boat from Troas went was the determining factor of which town in Macedonia Paul preached at first. But also obviously God sovereignly oversaw these events.

Paul went first to Neapolis and then to Philippi. After initially ministering successfully in Philippi, Paul was greatly persecuted and then was asked by the Roman magistrates to leave there. Possibly going by Jesus' Matthew 10:23 "Flee when persecuted" principle, Paul and Silas left.

Then still in obedience to God's supernatural guidance to preach in the province of Macedonia, Paul preached in two other major Macedonian cities – Thessalonica and Berea. Similar events happened at both of these cities as to what occurred earlier in Philippi. God used Paul and Silas to lead people to Him. Then persecution resulted in Paul and Silas leaving (see Acts 17:1-15).

Paul also preached in other Macedonian cities such as Neapolis (see Acts 16:11), Amphipolis and Appollonia (see Acts 17:1).

## **To Athens and Corinth in Greece**

Acts 17:15-16 records Paul then went to Athens. Athens was not in the province of Macedonia. The Book of Acts does not record whether God led them to do this or whether this was human planning. But once again, remember God had previously told Paul it was His will for Paul to preach the Gospel of Christ to non-Jews in many lands.

After preaching in Athens, Paul went to the city of Corinth in Achaia. The Bible once again does not record whether beforehand God led Paul to go to Corinth or whether this was a human plan. But Acts 18:9-10 reveals it was God's specific will that Paul continue to preach there despite the persecution: ***"Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision: 'Do not be afraid; but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.'"*** So regardless of whether Paul received specific supernatural guidance to go to Corinth this time, God was overseeing the events related to Paul and Silas' ministry travelling to and while there.

After staying in Corinth for a year and a half (see Acts 18:11), Paul returned to Antioch in Syria (see Acts 18:18-22).