

Acts of the Apostles  
Week 8 Summary  
Acts 16:1–17:34

Paul, with Silas, carries on his missionary journey and along the way he takes one of the converts from his first journey, Timothy. Timothy is the son of a Jewish mother and Greek father. In order for him to minister well, particularly in the synagogue, he needs to be circumcised. He would be recognized as a Jew (through his mother), but it would be suspected he wasn't circumcised because of his father. Paul is not taking this step for theological reasons (see Galatians), but for practical (see 1 Cor 9:20–22). Part of their ministry was to take the letter to the churches on behalf of the Jerusalem apostles and elders.

Paul had plans but he was prevented by the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Jesus for going to certain planned cities. He then had a vision which he and his team discerned was a call for them to take the gospel into Macedonia, which they promptly did.

Luke relates the story of the first convert, Lydia, in this new territory. Suddenly, he includes himself in the group, moving into the first “we” section of Acts. As the group continues to minister a slave girl who has a spirit of divination follows them for days declaring that the group is from God. Paul finally exorcises the demon, which leads to her owners (who profited from her ability) pressing charges.

The local magistrates have the ability to restore order without going to the lengths of a trial. So, they strip, beat, and imprison Paul and Silas. During the night there is an earthquake which technically frees everyone and the jailer thinking everyone has left, readies to kill himself until Paul stops him. He then comes to faith in Jesus and hosts the prisoners in his home. The next day he is given instructions to release the prisoners and send them out of their territory. Then Paul lets them know he is a Roman citizen (who should not be beaten without trial) and they are asked to leave.

The group continue their journey coming to Thessalonica where Paul reasons with the Jews in the synagogue for three sabbaths that Jesus was the Messiah. Some Jews and a lot of God-fearing Greeks believed which caused jealousy among the Jews. A mob was formed and the group had to be sent out. They went to Berea where they had even more success, but the group from Thessalonica followed them. Paul went on to Athens where he waited for Timothy and Silas to join him.

Paul in Athens follows his pattern of reasoning with the Jews in the synagogue and then with the Greeks. In this case he is speaking with philosophers who are both repulsed and intrigued with what he is saying about Jesus. They bring him to a place where new ideas are shared in the city and ask him to explain what he is saying fully. He then begins to share the Jewish understanding of God (Jewish Monotheism) using Greek categories of language, thought, and literature. Moving into introducing the Christ, although he doesn't use that term off the bat. Upon hearing of resurrection (Jesus's) some sneer, some want to hear more, and others believe.

*Faithful Presence*  
“Chapter Six”

1. What do you think of what Fitch says about us being with the poor?