

We are looking at the book called
the 'Acts of the Apostles'.

It might better be called
the 'Acts of the Holy Spirit'.

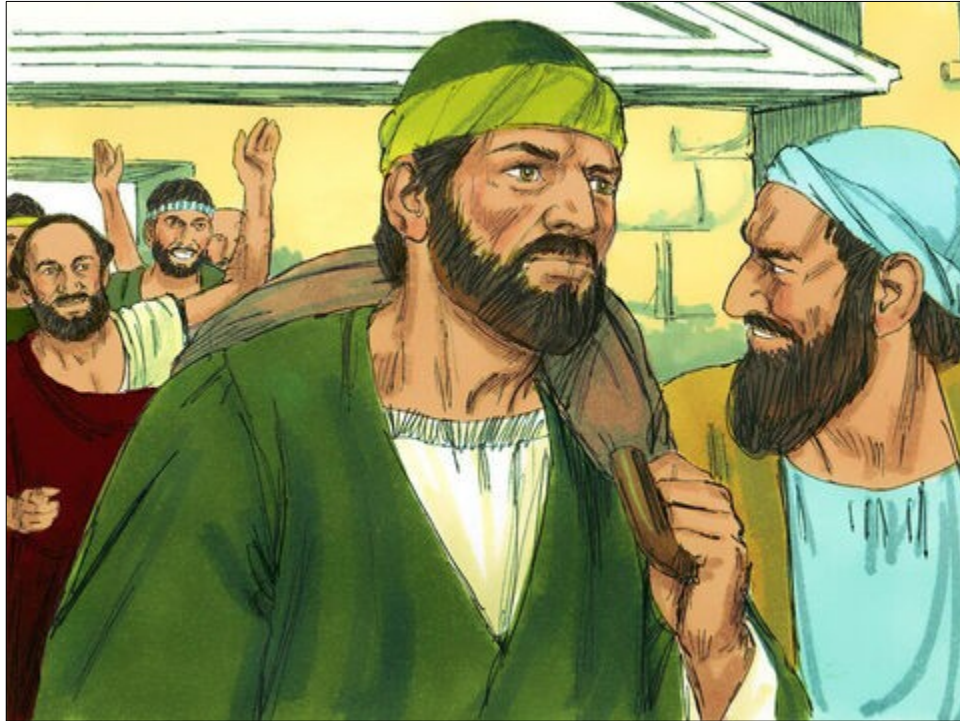
We will see in this passage how the Holy Spirit
worked
and see how he works in our lives too.

Continuing Paul's 2nd Mission
Crossing into Europe



This how the mission began in chapter 15

Paul went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.



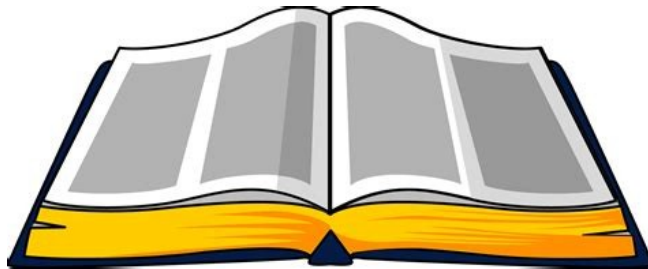
Acts 16: 1-5

He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek. The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. 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. As they travelled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.



Acts 16: 6-10

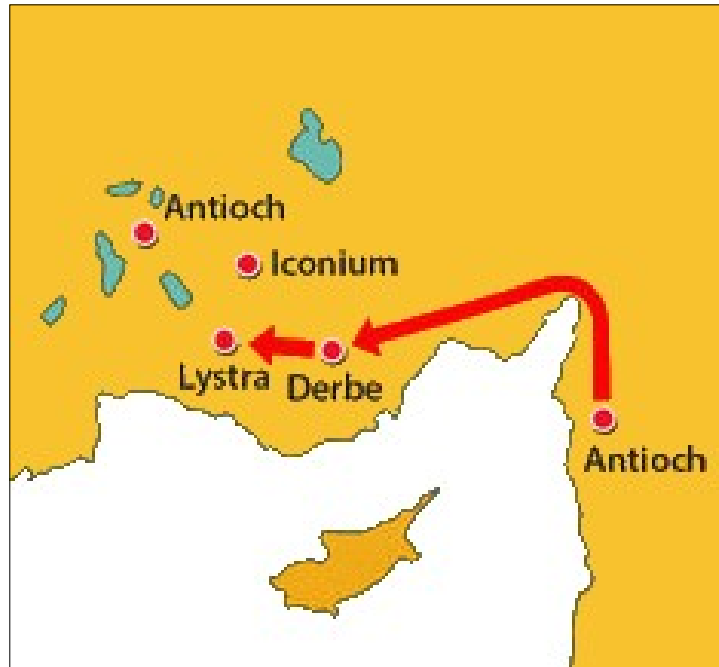
Paul and his companions travelled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 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.



Acts 16: 11-15

From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day on to Neapolis. From there we travelled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days. 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. One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshipper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. 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.

He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek.

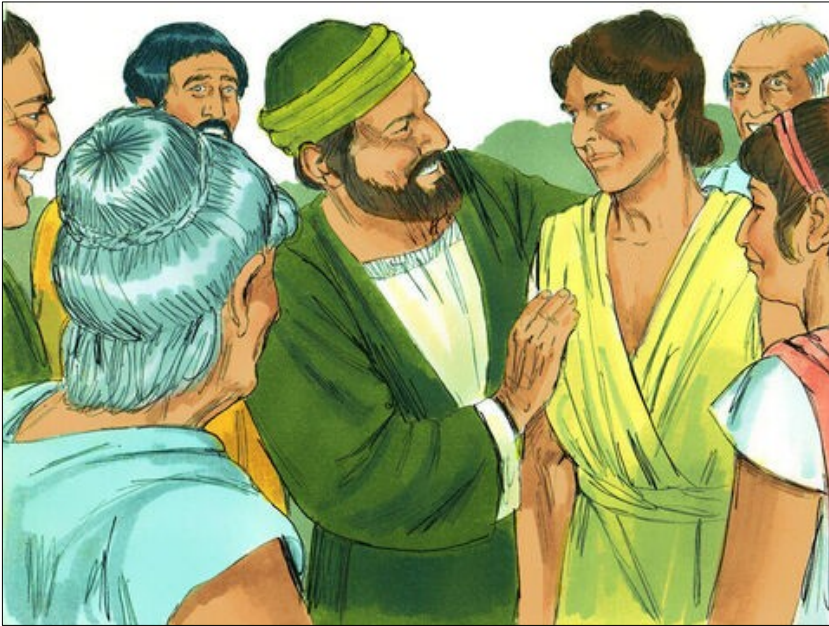


This was several (5 or 6) years after Paul's first visit. By now there were active churches there.

Now for the first time we are introduced to Timothy, who will play an important role in the work.

The Holy Spirit arranged the meeting

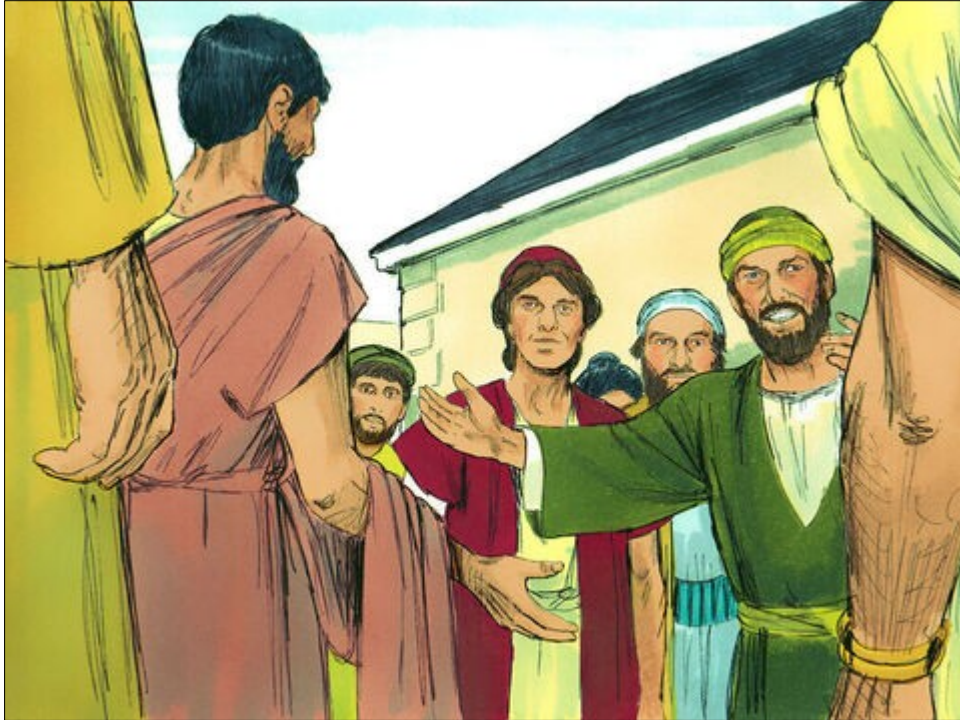
The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.



Paul had brought the Council letter saying that circumcision was not essential for salvation. So why did Paul circumcise Timothy?

Timothy was born a Jew, since his mother was Jewish. In order to help the outreach among the Jews, Paul aimed to prevent a cause of criticism to Timothy.

As they travelled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey.

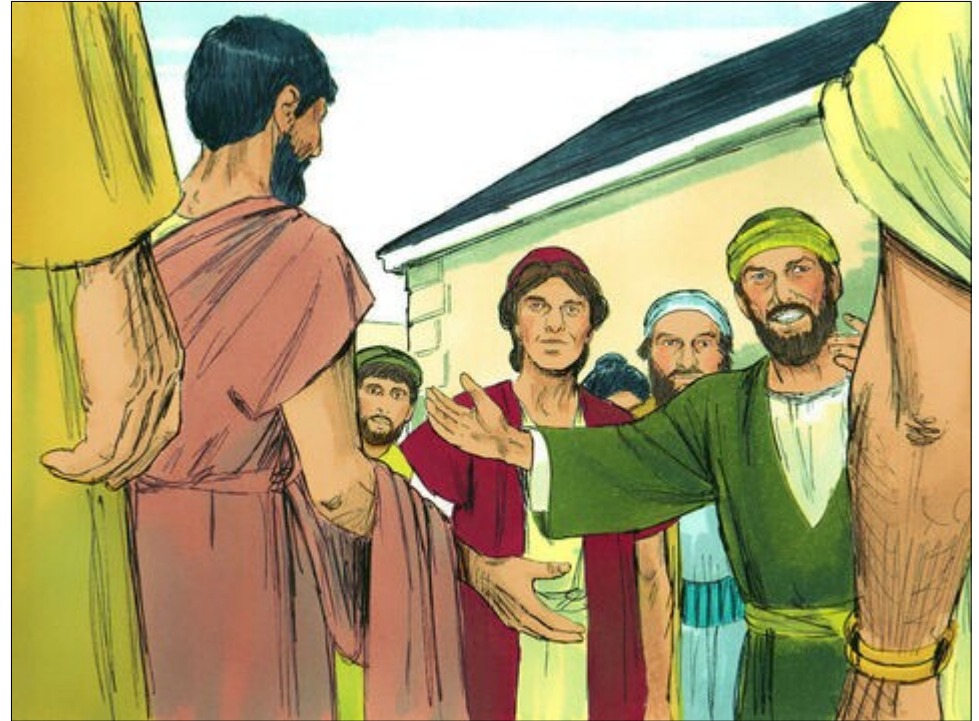


This was an ongoing part of the pastoral work in helping the Jewish and Gentile believers to worship together.

So the churches were strengthened in the faith
and grew daily in numbers.

The disciples were encouraged
and gladly shared their faith.
Daily, people were being saved.

Who was enabling them to do
the successful work of the
gospel?



Paul and his companions travelled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.



They couldn't go south.
How did the Holy Spirit
stop them?

A vision?

A prophecy?

Circumstances?

They were sensitive to
the Spirit's guiding.

When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.



They tried to go north to share the gospel. Notice how the Holy Spirit is also called 'the Spirit of Jesus'.

Their motives in trying were very good, but God clearly said 'Not there! Not now'.

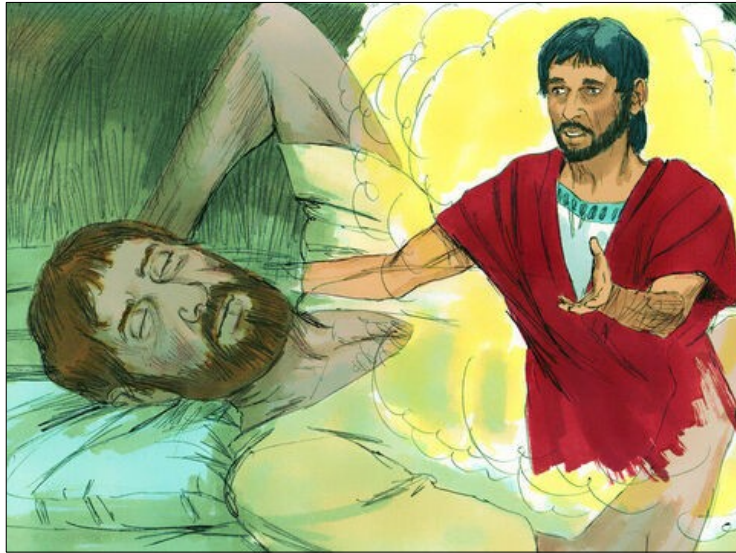
So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas.



They hadn't intended to go down to the coast at Troas, But if you can't go North or South and you have just come from the East, the only option left is WEST.

Europe needs the gospel too.

During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."



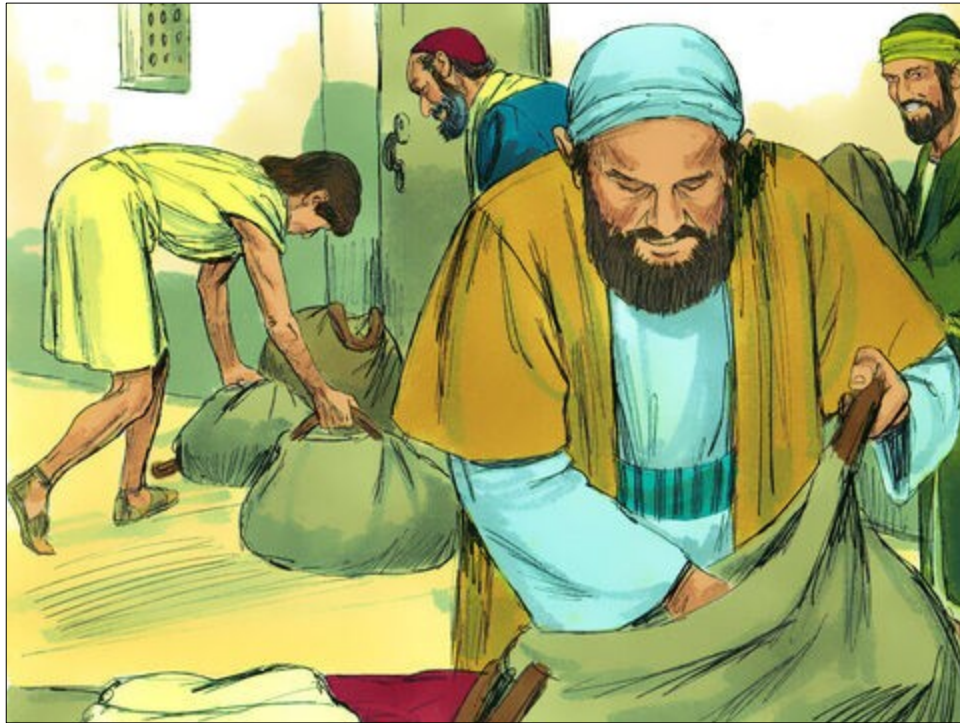
Now that Paul is in the right place, the Holy Spirit gives him a vision.

Q. Why didn't He tell Paul at the beginning?

Q. Why was the vision of a man?

Q. How did he know he was a Macedonian?

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.



Who are the 'WE'?
It was Luke telling us that he
joined them there at Troas!

Here is another reason why the
Spirit led them to Troas... in
order to meet the right person
for the next part of the work.

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.



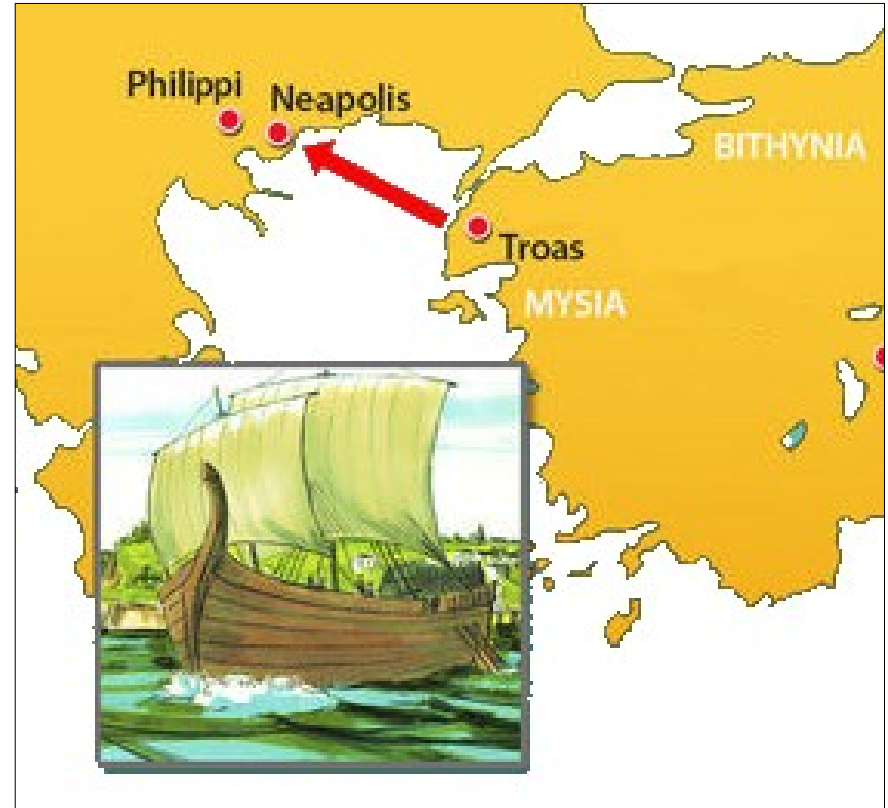
No delay. This was a ready response to the Holy Spirit's leading.

They understood the logic of Paul's vision. They were willing to follow Paul's lead.

From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day on to Neapolis.



They were heading for one of the major cities in Macedonia.
What lay ahead?



From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day on to Neapolis.

That they ‘sailed straight for Samothrace’ is quite revealing, because this is a nautical expression that means the wind was at their backs. So perfect were the winds that they sailed 156 miles in just two days, whereas returning the other way at a later time (Acts 20:6) it took five days.” (Hughes)



From there we travelled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

Paul's mission strategy.

There was a large,
predominantly Gentile
population.

Were they getting their
bearings?
Praying for openings?



On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer.



Note again Paul's strategy of seeking the Jews first. The Jewish population must have been very small. It needed only 10 men to form a synagogue!

He was looking for some on the Sabbath in a quiet place where those who were there might meet.

We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there.



All that they found was a ladies' prayer meeting. But out of a busy week, they made time to worship together.

This was God's providential arrangement. God specialises in small beginnings for a great work.

They began a gentle conversation. Notice men and women talking as equals before God.

One of those listening was a woman named Lydia,
a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira,
who was a worshipper of God.



Lydia was a business woman.

She dealt in high quality materials.

She was originally from Thyatira in the Roman province of Asia. (Remember, Paul wasn't allowed to go there since the Lord had arranged for her to be at Philippi).

She was a Gentile WOMAN (not a man!) who had turned from idols to worship the God of Israel.

The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.



As she listened to the Gospel message, something changed inside her.

The Lord opened her heart to respond by the secret working of the Holy Spirit. We call this 'regeneration' - new life entered her soul.

If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus, the Holy Spirit has done that in you too.

She and the members of her household were baptized,



Lydia made a personal commitment by being baptised. Members of her household (family, servants?) also believed and were baptised, just as Jesus had commanded (Matthew 28:19)

The picture shows Timothy baptising her. Although it doesn't say in the text. See 1 Corinthians 1:17.

After she was baptised she invited us to her home.
"If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said,
"come and stay at my house."

Here was evidence of her new life. As a business woman she probably had a fairly substantial property. She wants to use it for the Lord. No doubt, she wanted to learn more from these missionaries for her faith to grow.



If they thought she was a genuine believer? There was no doubt! Notice her respect for Jesus – she calls him ‘the Lord’.

And she persuaded us.

Why did they need persuading?

Perhaps they didn't want to impose.
There may have been more than a
few of them.

But she insisted and they accepted.
The Holy Spirit gave her a boldness to
ask them.





David Livingstone wanted to go to China, but God sent him to Africa. William Carey wanted to go to Polynesia, but God sent him to India. Adoniram Judson went to India, but God guided him to Burma.

God guides us along the way, to just the right place.

Once Paul got to Troas,
did he have a 'light bulb' moment?
He could now look back and say 'Ahhh'

This was the beginning of the first church in Philippi
and the start of the Mission to Europe



The Holy Spirit over-ruled in the place, the timing and the people in the progress of the Good news of Salvation.

He is still needed today in us as we seek to serve our wonderful Lord and Saviour.