



The Macedonian Vision



Scripture Reference:

[Acts 15:36-41; 16:1-10](#)

Suggested Emphasis: Missionaries go wherever God needs them to work.

Memory Verse: “Jesus said to the followers, ‘Go everywhere in the world. Tell the Good News to everyone.’” [Mark 16:15](#), [ICB](#)



Story Overview:

Paul suggested to Barnabas that they re-visit the churches they had established on their 1st missionary journey. Before leaving Antioch, he and Barnabas disagreed over who they should take with them, so they took different people and went to different places. Paul re-visited churches and attempted to enter new areas to teach people about Jesus. The Holy Spirit actively guided Paul and his companions, and one night, Paul had a vision of a man from the region of Macedonia standing and begging him to come and help. By entering Macedonia on this, his 2nd missionary journey, Paul will now taking the Gospel to Europe for the first time.

Background Study:

[Click here for an overview of the Book of Acts](#)

Working Hard for Unity:(Acts 15:1-35)

After returning to Antioch following their 1st missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas spent time helping the Antioch church resolve some major issues regarding Jewish and Gentile relations among Christian churches. The Jesus movement began in Jerusalem among the Jews, so the church there was very concerned with the Jewish perspective.

But the spread of the Gospel had now opened up to Gentiles, and the Antioch church was central in advancing the cause of Christ in ever-increasing missionary work. Some Jewish Christians from Jerusalem came to Antioch and began teaching that Gentile Christians must adhere to Jewish law to follow God and be counted as full members of God's people.

The Antioch church sent Paul and Barnabas to Jerusalem to meet with church leaders (including Peter and James) to resolve the conflict this was causing. Dividing the Christian movement would have gone against Jesus' prayer for unity (John 17) and hindered the spread of the Gospel. The conflict was resolved by the leadership of the church, affirming that both Jew and Gentile were members of God's people through faith in Jesus and through an agreement to only focus on the few ritual requirements that were currently preventing Jewish and Gentile Christians from spending time together. To ensure they were properly represented this time, the Jerusalem church sent Christian prophets Judas and Silas to deliver this news in the form of a letter, along with Paul and Barnabas, to spend time in Antioch.

A Rough Start for the 2nd Missionary Journey: ([Acts 15:36-41](#))

When the church conflicts between Jerusalem and Antioch were resolved, it seemed like a more personal conflict erupted. After returning from Jerusalem, Paul suggested that Barnabas revisit the churches they had established on the [1st missionary journey](#). Barnabas wanted to take his cousin, John Mark, along, but he and Paul had what the writer of Acts calls [in verse 39](#) a "sharp disagreement" over this point. No details were given about when John Mark's earlier leaving was recorded in Acts 13:13, but at this point, Paul now describes the earlier event as a desertion (Acts 15:38).

Paul and Barnabas could not agree, so Barnabas decided to leave and take John.

Mark will retrace the first part of the earlier journey. They sailed for the island of Cyprus. Although they could not agree with this, Paul did not lose all respect for Barnabas. In later writings, [1 Corinthians 9:1-16](#) (verse 6 in particular), Paul uses Barnabas and himself as examples of workers worthy of financial support. And we know Paul and John Mark worked together later on a number of occasions. At the end of his life, Paul asks for John Mark and refers to the great help he had been ([2 Timothy 4:11](#)).

In what is later referred to as "Paul's 2nd Missionary Journey" Paul headed out overland and went north through Syria towards Lystra and Derbe where he strengthened the churches. He took Silas (one of the prophets from Jerusalem mentioned earlier) along with him.

(see instructions at the end of this lesson if you would like to download the maps below)

Timothy Joins Paul and Silas ([Acts 16:1-5](#))

Paul had visited Lystra on his [1st missionary journey](#). He now returns and meets a disciple called Timothy. Timothy joined Paul on his journey and continued to be mentored by him in the subsequent years to come. [Learn more about Timothy's life here.](#)



A Vision and an Open Door ([Acts 16:6-10](#))

The language used in this passage reveals the Holy Spirit is actively involved in guiding Paul and his group. They travelled throughout [Phrygia](#), having been "kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of [Asia](#)". When they tried to enter [Bithynia](#), the Spirit of Jesus "would not allow them to." (verses 6-7, NIV)

Still searching for a place to preach, Paul travels west to the coast of the Aegean Sea and the busy port city of [Troas](#). After so many refusals, Paul finally receives a “yes” from the Holy Spirit in the form of a vision during the night. In the vision, a man from [Macedonia](#) stands before Paul, begging him to come to [Macedonia](#) and help. The next morning, Paul concludes that God had called them to preach the Gospel in [Macedonia](#).

This is the first record we have of the Gospel being spread across the Aegean Sea into what is now known as Europe.



Paul is a great example of someone who submitted his life to God's will. It was, after all, God's mission and not Paul's mission.

Paul's group now includes Paul, Silas and Timothy. Upon leaving [Troas](#), the author of the Book of Acts, Luke begins to use the pronoun “we” instead of “them” ([verse 10](#)). For this reason, we can assume Luke has now joined Paul's travel group.

The next chapters in the Book of Acts cover the spread of the Gospel throughout Macedonia, Greece and back in Asia Minor. After his travels, Paul will head back to Jerusalem. On his way, he will stop again in Troas, where a young man, [Eutychus, falls from a window while Paul preaches](#).

- [Lydia Becomes a Christian](#)
- [A Jailer Becomes a Christian](#)
- [The Noble Bereans](#)
- [Paul Preaches in Athens-Mars Hill](#)
- [Priscilla and Aquila](#)
- [Paul in Ephesus](#)
- [Eutychus Falls from a Window](#)
- [Paul Goes to Jerusalem](#)



Way to Introduce the Story:

Have a globe atlas or world map to use in class today. "Let's pretend we are going to travel to a far away country today to teach people about Jesus. (Let one of the children choose a country and find it on the globe or in the atlas.) What language would we have to know if we went there? What kind of clothes would we need to bring? What would we need to do before we left? In today's story we are going to learn about another trip that Paul took to teach people about Jesus."

[top](#)

The Story:

There were many Christians in the Antioch church. Some were from Jewish families, and some were from Gentile families, but they all loved God. Paul and Barnabas were two missionaries who were members of the Antioch church.

Once, some men from Jerusalem came to Antioch and told the Christians that Gentiles could not become full members of God's people unless they became Jews first. But Paul and Barnabas said this was not true. They travelled to Jerusalem and talked to the church leaders there about it.

The Jerusalem leaders sent a letter back to Antioch to tell all Christians there that what Paul and Barnabas said was correct. Gentile Christians did NOT have to become Jews first to be full members of God's people. Both Jews and Gentiles are part of God's people through faith in Jesus. There may be differences on many things, but all Christians need peace and unity.

In the letter, the Jewish leaders suggested that the Gentile and Jewish Christians try to understand each other better when they talk about God. The leaders said that the Gentile Christians should follow some of the Jewish purity customs so they would not offend the Jews who wanted to learn about Jesus and so that both Jewish and Gentile believers could enjoy practical fellowship.

The church in Antioch thought this was a very good idea and agreed.

After some time had passed, Paul began to think about all of the people he and Barnabas had visited on their 1st Missionary Journey.

When Paul asked Barnabas to go on a 2nd Missionary Journey with him, Barnabas wanted to take his cousin John Mark. Paul remembered how John Mark had deserted them when they were on the 1st Journey. He did not want him to come again. Paul and Barnabas had a very big disagreement about this.

Since they could not agree about John Mark, Barnabas and Paul decided to go on two different journeys.

Barnabas took John Mark and sailed to Cyprus to encourage the churches there.

But Paul went a different direction. Instead of taking a ship, Paul set out walking. He travelled to many churches he had established on his last journey.

Paul also took someone along with him to be a helper. He took a good worker called Silas.

On this 2nd Missionary Journey, Paul visited some of the churches he had started on his 1st Journey. When they came to Lystra, the Christians were happy to see Paul again.

In Lystra, Paul and Silas met a young man named Timothy. Timothy's father was a Greek, and most Greeks did not follow God. But since he was a little boy, Timothy's mother (Eunice) and grandmother (Lois) had taught him about God. Paul was so impressed by this young man that he invited him to join him on his missionary journey. Timothy left his family and began travelling with Paul and Silas, telling people about Jesus.

After Paul, Silas and Timothy left Lystra, they travelled to teach people about Jesus. Paul always tried to think about

where God would want him to go. The Holy Spirit did not want them to go in that direction when they tried to enter Asia.

Later, Paul tried to lead the group into Bithynia, but he was stopped by the Holy Spirit once again. Paul was a missionary and wanted to go where God wanted him to go, but the Spirit kept saying “no”.

Paul stopped in Troas to decide what he should do next. But God had a special way of revealing his plans to Paul.

One night in Troas, Paul received an answer from God.

A man came to him in a vision. The man in the vision was from Macedonia, and he stood and begged Paul, saying, “Come to Macedonia and help us.”

Now Paul knew where God wanted him to go! The next morning, Paul told his travel companions they would visit Macedonia. Everyone prepared for the trip. There would be many adventures ahead of them.

Macedonia was part of what is now known as Europe. Paul was the first missionary ever recorded as taking the Good News of Jesus to Europe. Paul was a missionary willing to go where God wanted him to go.

And how about you? Are you willing to go where God wants you to go? Are you willing to do what God wants you to do?

[top](#)

Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using a variety of methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection, student interaction and/or emotion.

[Click here for visual aids and story-telling methods.](#)

[Click here to download the slideshow](#) or [click here for the printable illustrations](#).

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Or use the video below.

Review Questions:

1. Why did Barnabas and Paul not go together on the second missionary journey? They disagreed over who to take with them.
2. Who joined Paul during his journey? Timothy
3. What did Paul see in his vision? A man from Macedonia begging Paul to come there and help him
Where did Paul go after his vision? Macedonia

Song Suggestions:

- [I Can Be a Missionary](#)
- [Jesus Loves the Little Children](#)
- [L-O-V-E Song](#)
- [Roll the Gospel Chariot Song](#)
- [This Little Light of Mine](#)
- Refer to the [Song Page](#) on this website for more options.

Learning Activities and Crafts:

[\(How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation\)](#)

Activities:

- Begin a map of Paul's Second Missionary Journey.
- Obtain a missionary report from someone your congregation supports. Read this to the class and then write notes to mail to the missionary.
- To review, you or the children can draw a large outline of Paul on a whiteboard or piece of paper (even drawing with a stick in the sand works fine if you are outside). Then, after you have taught the lesson, ask the children to think about what they have just learned from the Bible. Have them write descriptive words and/or draw pictures inside and around the outlined illustration of Paul. When you see what the children are writing or drawing, you may be surprised or encouraged by what insights they have picked up from the story. This is also a good opportunity to correct or add to anything you might not have covered as well as you could have when you were



teaching.

If you prefer, you can [download and print the illustration of Paul provided here](#) and then have the children write and draw on it for the review.

- Alternatively, if you are teaching a series of lessons about Paul, you might draw an outline of his body on a large poster or paper and then add descriptive words about him each time you study a new lesson.
- [Click here for the 16 lessons about the Life of Paul grouped together as a set.](#)

Crafts:



- Use a globe or [world map](#) and discuss some of the different cultures and languages of the world. Talk about how you might teach the gospel in a few different countries.
- Make a relief map of Paul's Journeys featuring the place in today's story. If you are studying Paul's journeys over a few lessons, then you could add more details to the map each time you learn about another stop on the journey. Instructions on how to make a relief map at <https://www.weirdunsocializedhomeschoolers.com/step-by-step-to-making-salt-dough-map/>



- Print bookmarks, trading cards or timelines [\(printable pages\)](#).

- Visit the [Teaching Ideas](#) page for additional activities and crafts.

Other Online Resources:

- [Colouring page and puzzle worksheets- Timothy joins Paul \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Colouring page and puzzle worksheets-the call to Macedonia \(Calvary Curriculum\)](#)
- [Review: Create a “passport” that covers the life of Paul. Good visual ideas and activities. Could be split up to go with several lessons or taught all together as a review of previous lessons concerning Paul found \(kidsbibledebjackson.blogspot.co.nz\)](#)
- To understand how another teacher explains what a missionary is, watch the ten-minute video at https://youtu.be/ZK6pOWNwd_s. The speaker references another church and a different Bible story so you won't want to just play the entire video for the children. Use this as an example and then say it in your own way.

<https://www.pinterest.com/marynnz/paul-2nd-journey/>

The maps above are by Sweet Publishing and accessed through [Free Bible Images](#). You can download this and many other illustrations for free if you agree to the [generous Creative Commons terms explained on their website](#).

[top](#)

©Mission Bible Class 2011-2024 Copies may only be made for personal and ministry purposes. Not to be sold or profited from in any way. www.missionbibleclass.org

