

## Lesson

## 1

# The Gospel Goes to Europe

Acts 16; Philippians 4:6-8

Ancient  
Ruins of  
Philippi

## Paul: A Profile

Do these words describe someone you know? Bold, adventurous, willing to take risks.

What about these words? Intelligent, well-educated, stubborn.

### Meet Paul.

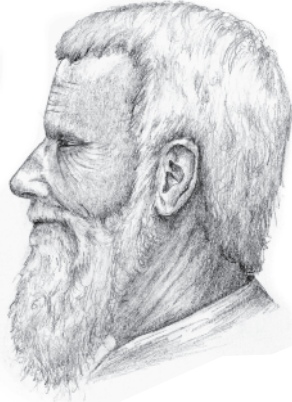
The Apostle Paul was all of the above, and more. The Bible doesn't tell us much about Paul's background. We know he grew up in Tarsus, outside the Jews' homeland of Israel, and he studied the Hebrew Scriptures and Jewish law in Jerusalem.

Paul was not a typical Jew. He was a Roman citizen and spoke several languages. The Romans, under their emperor, ruled a huge collection of lands from Europe to Africa that included Israel. Paul's Roman citizenship gave him rights and privileges that most of his fellow countrymen didn't enjoy.

Paul was committed to wiping out the new religion started by Jesus. He received official papers permitting him to arrest Christians. He did his job well.

### Paul's new mission.

Then one day as Paul traveled to another city to hunt down Christians, Jesus, the leader of the Christians Paul hated, struck him to the ground with a bright light. Paul's life was changed forever. Jesus knew that Paul was a persuasive leader, and could bring many people to the truth if he were on the right side.



Paul changed his mind and became a whole-hearted Christian. Jesus told Paul He had chosen him to take the Gospel not only to the Jews, but also to Gentiles, or non-Jews. Paul spent the rest of his life as a Christian missionary.

Paul traveled to many cities, each with its own culture and flavor. In this lesson, Paul begins his second missionary journey.

## The Gospel in Philippi

### Beginning the journey.

Paul and his friend Silas set off from Antioch, the third largest city in the Roman Empire. They passed through Syria and Cilicia near Paul's hometown Tarsus and visited Christian churches along the route.

Timothy joined the group in Lystra. When Paul had been there on an earlier trip, Timothy had become a believer in Jesus.

One of Paul's purposes for this trip was to preach the Gospel to those who had never heard it. But as the three men planned their trip through what is now Turkey, God told them their plans were wrong. Paul wasn't sure what to do.

### Following God's leading.

When they reached Troas on the Aegean seacoast, Paul had a vision. He saw a man from Macedonia, a part of what is now Europe across the Aegean Sea. The man pled, "Come over into Macedonia and help us." Paul knew the dream was from God. He had

### REA----- AND ABLE

Paul was well-equipped to be a missionary to Jews and non-Jews alike. Note his qualifications:

- held both Roman and Jewish citizenship
- spoke at least three languages
- was highly educated
- was comfortable with both city and country life
- was content in whatever circumstances he faced
- received special instruction from the resurrected Jesus

## Lesson 1

never been to Europe, but if that was where God wanted the missionaries to go, they would go.

In Troas they picked up another helper. Luke was a doctor and a writer. Later he wrote about Paul's life and travels.

The four men boarded a ship and arrived at the port of Neapolis. Traveling inland, they reached Philippi, where they talked with women who met by the riverside to pray. One of these ladies was Lydia. Luke describes this woman as "a seller of purple." After Lydia believed, she was baptized. She offered her house as a headquarters for the missionaries.

### Casting out a demon.

As days passed, the group noticed a demon-possessed slave girl following them when they walked through the city. Because of the demon, this slave was profitable to her masters as a fortuneteller. The girl shouted, "These men are the servants of the most high God, who show us the way of salvation."

Finally one day Paul turned and said to the demon in the girl, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." Demons are not as powerful as Jesus, so the demon had no choice but to leave.

### Arrested and jailed.

The girl's masters were furious that they could no longer make money from their slave. They dragged Paul and Silas off to the town court, but they didn't tell the rulers of Philippi the real reason they were upset. "These men are disturbing our city," they complained. "They are teaching customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to practice." An angry crowd gathered to watch.

The rulers ordered that Paul and Silas be beaten and put in jail. The jailer had strict orders not to let the men escape. If the prisoners escaped, the jailer would be executed.

Although Paul and Silas were still in pain from

the beating, the jailer forced them into stocks—wooden frames with holes for a prisoner's feet.

### Shaken by an earthquake.

What did Paul and Silas do that night in jail? The Bible says, "At midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises to God, and the prisoners heard them."

Suddenly God shook the prison with an earthquake. The bolts and locks loosened, and the stocks were forced apart.

The jailer awoke and saw the prison doors wide open and assumed his prisoners had all escaped. He reached for his sword to kill himself, but Paul shouted, "Don't hurt yourself; we are all here!"

The jailer was astounded. He came shaking to Paul and Silas. "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" he asked.

Paul was tired and sore, but he took this opportunity. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved," he said. The jailer listened and believed.

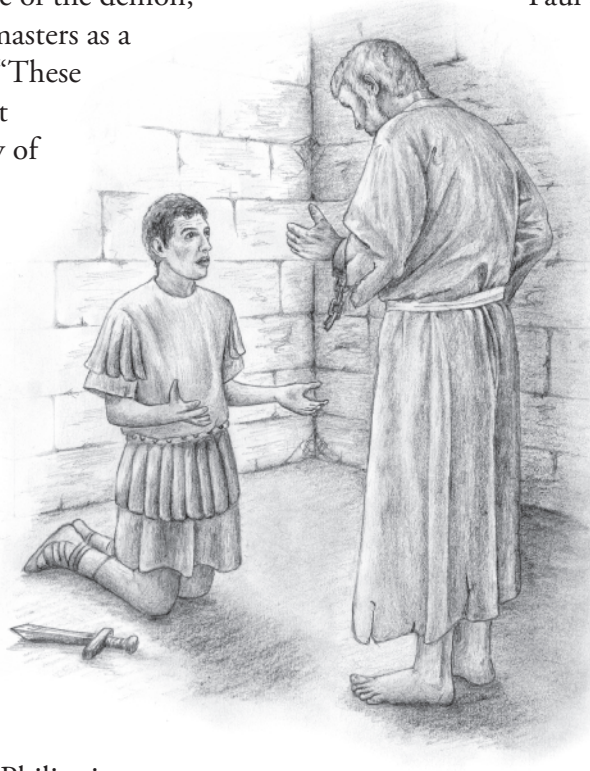
The jailer took Paul and Silas to his house and cleaned their wounds. He and his whole family believed the Gospel.

### Leaving Philippi.

The next morning a message arrived from the rulers of the city. "Let those men go," they said.

Paul had not yet mentioned his Roman citizenship. He replied, "We are Romans, and they beat us even though we were innocent. Are they going to let us go secretly? They can come let us out themselves."

The rulers were horrified that they had jailed Roman citizens without a trial. They begged the men to leave the city. After meeting with the Christians in Philippi once more, the missionary band traveled on.



**Map It**

On the map on page 69, draw a line to show Paul's journey from Antioch to Tarsus, and then through Lystra and Troas and across the Aegean Sea to Neapolis and Philippi.

*Securing the Facts*

**Complete the outline of the lesson using choices from the box below.**

- I. Paul leaves Antioch with Silas.
- II. Timothy joins them at Lystra.
- III. Paul waits for God's direction at Troas.
  - A. \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. Luke joins the group.
- IV. The missionaries cross the Aegean Sea to Macedonia.
  - A. \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_
- V. Paul spreads the Gospel in the city of Philippi.
  - A. \_\_\_\_\_
  - B. \_\_\_\_\_
  - C. Paul and Silas sing and pray in prison.
  - D. \_\_\_\_\_
  - E. \_\_\_\_\_

- |  |   |
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| • An earthquake frees Paul and Silas.            | • Paul receives a vision one night.       |
| • The jailer and his family believe in Jesus.    | • The group arrives in Philippi.          |
| • They make their headquarters at Lydia's house. | • Paul casts a demon out of a slave girl. |
|  | • Paul and Silas are thrown into prison.  |

*Where Was It?*

**Choose answers from the box.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_ The homeland of the Jews
2. \_\_\_\_\_ A region of Europe across the Aegean Sea from Troas.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Paul grew up in this Roman town.
4. \_\_\_\_\_ In this Macedonian city, Paul commanded a demon to leave a young girl alone.

- |              |
|--------------|
| A. Macedonia |
| B. Israel    |
| C. Philippi  |
| D. Tarsus    |

# Scripture Focus

## Paul's Letter to the Philippians

God directed Paul to write letters of instruction and encouragement to the many churches he started and visited on his missionary journeys. Since his letters contain God's instructions for all Christians, regardless of when or where they live, they have been collected in the New Testament portion of the Bible. Today's Scripture focus is a quote from Paul's letter to the church in Philippi, about ten years after his visit and memorable time there in the town jail.

### Verses From Paul's Letter

Philippians 4:6-8

- v. 6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*
- v. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.*
- v. 8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.*

### Don't Worry About It!

1. In verse 6 of this Scripture, Paul tells the people of Philippi to "be careful for nothing." What does he mean?

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2. What should we do instead of worry? \_\_\_\_\_

3. What will happen to us when we choose to pray instead of worry?

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4. In verse 8 of the passage, Christians are told how to think. List the kinds of things we are encouraged to think about.

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Notice that worrying is not included in this list of good thoughts. So, the next time you are tempted to fret, pray instead. Think about pure and lovely things. Let God's calm replace your worry with peace.

#### A TOSSED SALAD

Think about the different kinds of people who accepted God's call to begin the new Christian church at Philippi:

- a jailer and his family
- a wealthy businesswoman
- a slave girl recently delivered from occult oppression

Only God could use such diverse people to build a successful, beautiful church!



## *In Today's Terms*

This exercise at the end of each lesson will help you see how Biblical principles can be applied to the everyday lives of young people in our time. In every lesson, you will follow three teenage brothers who face problems and struggles similar to those you face. Just like you, these boys have opportunity to practice what the Bible teaches.

In his time, Paul waited for direction from God when he wasn't sure what to do next. For Paul, God's voice came in a vision, and he knew he was to travel over to Macedonia. Today, we might not see visions, but God still speaks if we listen for His voice. As you read the story sections below, choose what you think God would say to each person.

### **Circle the letter of the best answer for each of the following stories.**

Terry, Larry, and Gary are three brothers. Terry (17) enjoys adventures. Larry (15) likes to read. Gary (14) does a little of both and tries to keep the other two in line.

Terry drives his brothers to school. This morning, they're running late because Larry has spent too long perfecting the science report that is due today.

"If it wouldn't be for you, we'd be halfway to school by now," Terry says, as Larry jumps into the backseat and the car lurches forward.

1. If Larry listens for God's voice, how will he answer?
  - A. "I couldn't help it."
  - B. "At least I get good grades."
  - C. "I'm sorry, Terry. I should have finished the paper last night."

As Terry crests a hill, Mr. Lowell's little dog races across the road in front of his car. Terry brakes hard. He sees he won't be able to stop in time, so he swerves off the road. The car lurches, spraying gravel into the air and crashing through Mr. Lowell's yard fence at the edge of the road.

The car comes to rest in the yard. A stunned silence is broken by Gary. "No use trying to make it to school on time, anymore!"

Terry gets out to check the damage. A broken post has dented in the front driver's side. The rest of the car has picked up clods of dirt, pebbles, and grass.

"I should have just hit the crazy dog," Terry mumbles. "Then at least it would have been Mr. Lowell's fault."

2. If Terry listens for God's voice, how will he approach Mr. Lowell in this situation?
  - A. He'll sue the dog owner for letting his dog loose.
  - B. He'll send Mr. Lowell a bill for repairs.
  - C. He will repair the car at his own expense and accept money from Mr. Lowell if he offers it.

Mr. Lowell hurries across the yard. The dog is now panting from the porch steps, watching the scene. "Is everyone okay?" asks Mr. Lowell.

3. If Mr. Lowell listens for God's voice, he will . . .
  - A. Offer to pay for damages to the car.
  - B. Try to get the boys to pity him because his back is bad and he can't fix the fence.
  - C. Yell at Terry for being such an irresponsible driver.

\* For more activities for Lesson 1, turn to pages 42 and 43.



# Two Cities — Two Responses

Acts 17:1-15; 1 Thessalonians 5:15-23

Modern Thessaloniki

istockphoto/Thinkstock

## Next stop: Thessalonica.

Leaving Philippi after their prison and earthquake experiences, Paul, Silas, and Timothy headed east for the port city of Thessalonica. They found a place to stay in the house of a man called Jason.

Because many Greek people lived in Thessalonica, Paul could be thankful that he spoke Greek and understood Greek customs. At the same time, because Jews also lived there, he could be thankful that he was a Jew and had studied Jewish law.

## Mixed reactions to the Gospel.

In new cities Paul visited, he usually started his mission in the synagogue, the Jewish center of worship. So Paul went to the synagogue and asked for permission to speak there. The Jews met in the synagogue on the Sabbath day, or Saturday, so every Saturday for three weeks Paul taught them from the Scripture.

Paul told them what he believed about Jesus. He used prophecies about Christ from the Scripture to show that Jesus was the Messiah, the one the Jews believed would come and help them. The Jews expected the Messiah to free them from the

Romans, but Paul believed that Jesus came to free people from sin.

Some of the Jews listened with open hearts and minds. They believed the good news that Jesus had come as the Messiah. Greeks who had become Jewish converts were especially open to the Gospel, and many of them became Christians, as did many important women in the city.

## An angry mob.

But a large group of Jews did not believe Paul's message. When they saw how many people Paul was converting, they became angry and envious.

One day the Jews, tired of Paul's teaching, gathered a crowd to go to Jason's house. They demanded to see the missionaries.

Not finding Paul, the mob dragged Jason and a few other Christians to the rulers of the city. "The men that have turned the world upside down have come here also!" they shouted. Apparently they had heard stories about Christianity even before Paul preached about it.

They criticized Jason for letting the missionaries stay at his house, and they falsely accused Paul and his band. "They're working against Caesar, the emperor," they said, "preaching that there is another king named Jesus."

This troubled the rulers, but they didn't put anyone into prison. They let the Christians go.

## The noble Bereans.

After this protest, the Thessalonian Christians sent their missionary friends on their way. They set off at night for the town of Berea about forty-five miles away.

Paul tried again. He went to the synagogue in Berea, and again used the Scriptures to show that Jesus was the Jews' Messiah.



Luke later wrote about the Bereans, “These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so.”

The Bereans were eager listeners, but they wanted to be sure Paul was telling the truth. When they compared Paul’s ideas with Scripture, and found they agreed, the Bereans accepted the Gospel. As in Thessalonica, many women of

high standing became Christians.

Things went well for a while, but then Jews from Thessalonica arrived. They came to try to turn public opinion against Paul. When Paul saw another mob forming, he knew he would have to move on.

Leaving Silas and Timothy behind to encourage the new believers, he traveled south toward Athens.

### GOING AGAINST THE CROWD

Although it was a large crowd that drove the missionaries out of Thessalonica, there was still a group of believers in that place who were willing to follow Jesus no matter what it cost them. Perhaps this is why the Thessalonian church became known for its faith and courage.

### Map It

On the map on page 69, extend Paul’s journey to Thessalonica and Berea.

## Securing the Facts

If the statement is *true*, circle the first letter. If it is *false*, circle the second letter.

True False

1. **S S** Paul spoke to the Thessalonians on the Sabbath day.
2. **C E** None of the Thessalonians believed the message of Paul, Silas, and Timothy.
3. **A R** The Jews who didn’t like Paul gathered a mob to help them capture him.
4. **I R** Lydia told the angry mob that Paul was not at home.
5. **C P** The mob told the rulers that Paul’s doctrine was a threat because it supported Jesus as king instead of Caesar.
6. **T H** As soon as the sun rose the next day, Paul and his companions escaped the town.
7. **U T** The people of Berea read the Scriptures once a week to make sure that Paul was telling them the truth.
8. **H R** Jews from Thessalonica heard that the Word was being preached in Berea and came to Berea to stir up the people.
9. **E E** Paul, Silas, and Timothy had to escape once more.

Follow the directions to complete the secret message. Start by copying the letters you circled above in order. Next, copy the letters you did *not* circle.

\_\_\_\_\_

# Scripture Focus

## Paul's Letter to the Thessalonians

Despite the riotous mob of unbelievers in Thessalonica during Paul's initial visit there, a vibrant church was formed from those who did believe. In this closing portion of his first letter to the believers at Thessalonica, Paul instructs God's people about how they should behave.

### Verses From Paul's Letter

1 Thessalonians 5:15-23

- v. 15 See that none render evil for evil unto any man; but ever follow that which is good, both among yourselves, and to all men.*
- v. 16 Rejoice evermore.*
- v. 17 Pray without ceasing.*
- v. 18 In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*
- v. 19 Quench not the Spirit.*
- v. 20 Despise not prophesyings.*
- v. 21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.*
- v. 22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.*
- v. 23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

### Good Advice

**Match the eight commands given with their meanings.**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| _____ v. 15 [Do not] render evil for evil . . . but ever follow that which is good. | A. Don't ignore the Holy Spirit.                                  |
| _____ v. 16 Rejoice evermore.   | B. When someone mistreats you, don't fight back. Keep doing good. |
| _____ v. 17 Pray without ceasing.   | C. Avoid every evil, no matter how small it looks.                |
| _____ v. 18 In every thing give thanks.   | D. Don't mock God's messengers or their messages.                 |
| _____ v. 19 Quench not the Spirit.  | E. Check things out. If they are good, keep them.                 |
| _____ v. 20 Despise not prophesyings.   | F. Be grateful in every situation.                                |
| _____ v. 21 Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.                         | G. Be constantly joyful.  |
| _____ v. 22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.                                    | H. Never give up praying.   |

At the end of these instructions to the Thessalonian Christians, Paul expresses his wish that God will both *sanctify [them] wholly* and *preserve [them] blameless*.

Sanctify means "to purify." In your own words, rewrite verse 23.

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## *In Today's Terms*

Every person at Thessalonica and Berea had a choice about responding to the Gospel. God could have made us like robots that simply do what we are told. Instead, God wants us to serve Him because we choose to. In the following scenarios, what opportunities do Larry and Gary have to choose to serve God?

**Choose the letter of the best answer for each of the following.**

Larry often borrows books from the public library. He has just finished a book about the Roman Empire. As he gathers the borrowed books to return to the library, he remembers that he spilled Coke all over the first few pages of the history book. Larry knows he'll be charged the price of a new book if he brings it back damaged.

1. If Larry chooses to follow God, he will . . .
  - A. Tell the librarian that the book was damaged when he borrowed it.
  - B. Tell the librarian that he will pay to replace the book.
  - C. Say nothing about the damage and hope the librarian doesn't notice it.

Gary and Terry bike to the library with Larry, mainly to get some fresh air and exercise. Gary has homework which he might be able to do at the library while Larry takes care of the damaged book.

Halfway to the library, Terry asks for his water bottle. Gary has a backpack, so he has everyone's things. Gary checks for the water bottle. It's not there.

"Oops," Gary says, "I remember now—I took it out to rearrange things when Larry gave me his books." "What! How could you forget the water when it's 90° out here today!" Terry shouts.

2. If Gary chooses to respond the way God wants him to, he will . . .
  - A. Tell Terry he can carry his own things after this.
  - B. Tell Terry he can go across the street and buy another bottle of water.
  - C. Use his own pocket cash to buy another bottle of water for Terry.

Gary is worried about Terry. In the last few days, Terry has become very irritable and hard to live with. Terry has some wonderful qualities and talents that could make him useful to God. All three boys have accepted Christ as their Saviour, but Gary wonders if Terry has stopped spending time with God. Is Terry growing as a Christian? Gary is the younger brother, though. What should he do?

3. If Gary accepts the direction of God he will definitely pray for Terry. What else will he do?
  - A. Wait for Terry's next blow-up to tell his brother he'd better change his attitude.
  - B. Find a private moment to remind Terry that God could use him so much more if his attitudes were better.
  - C. Conspire with Larry to stay away from Terry until his attitudes improve.