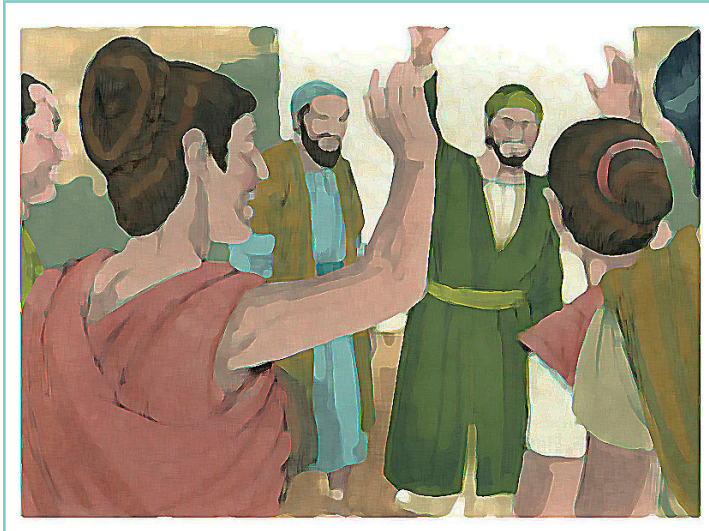


Lesson 5: Hospitality



Introduction

As the Apostle Paul traveled from place to place, proclaiming the message of Jesus, he met many new people. On one occasion, he encountered a wealthy merchant woman named Lydia, who invited the apostles to come and stay at her house.

Read: Acts 16:1-15

On reading these verses, what are some of your initial impressions and questions? What stands out to you?

Old Testament

New Testament

Where in the Bible?

The Book of Acts follows Paul's journeys across the Roman Empire.

The New Testament: Mission

As the apostles traveled from place to place, they started new congregations in the towns they visited. In spite of rejection and persecution, the message of Jesus spread throughout the Roman Empire.

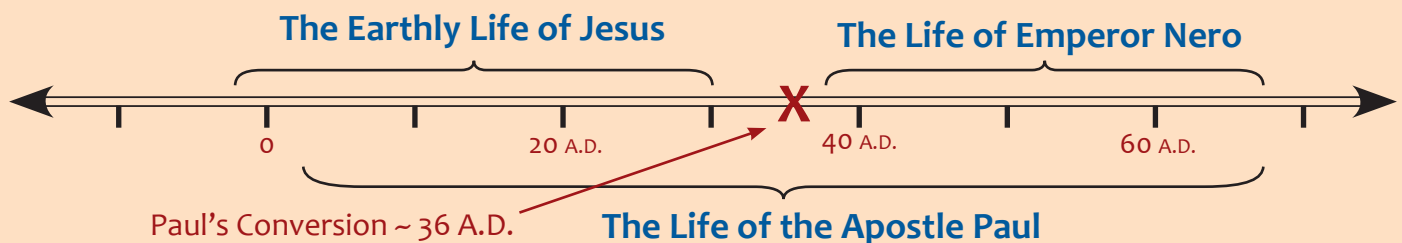
Biblical Background

The book of Acts shows us many examples of the resistance that was faced by the first Apostles. But there were also those who welcomed the message of Jesus and became believers. Many new converts, like Lydia, grew to become leaders in the early church.

As Scripture says in Acts 17:4: "Some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women." Today's story gives an example of how Paul's message had a positive effect particularly on the lives of women, and how their influence and sponsorship was instrumental in the church's growth.

When in Time?

Based on Roman historical records, scholars indicate that it was the emperor Nero who ruled Rome during most of the ministry of Paul. Nero lived from 37-68 A.D. and by all accounts, was an insanely cruel man. During Nero's reign from the time he took power at age 17 to the time of his death 14 years later, the Emperor had many Christians killed, including the Apostle Paul himself.



Discuss: Acts 16:1-15

1. According to Acts 16:1, what young man joined Paul as he passed through the city of Lystra? What was this young man's dual heritage?
2. In Acts 16:6, we read that Paul and his friends were "forbidden by the Holy Spirit" to speak the Word in Asia. Do you think the Holy Spirit ever stops us from doing things? Why or how might that happen?
3. While in the city of Philippi, Paul and Timothy went "outside the gate to the riverside." Why did they go there? Do you think it was a coincidence that Lydia was there at that specific time and place? Or was something more at work?
4. According to verse 14, why did Lydia pay attention to Paul? What exactly does that mean?
5. Do you think that God sets up particular events or circumstances in your life? Can you give an example?
6. Why do you think that the message of Jesus had particular appeal to Greek women? What do you think they were hearing in that message that they had not heard elsewhere?
7. At that time in history, all Christian congregations could be referred to as "house churches." Why would it have been important to have believers like Lydia open their homes to the apostles?
8. Read Titus 2:1-8, where Paul gives some advice to Christian men and women. What would you say is the common thread in all this advice? In what ways does Paul's advice here apply to all of us?

Where in the World?

The map to the right shows a wide view of the regions around the Mediterranean Sea, with a line showing the path of Paul's second missionary journey.

- a) Where did Paul start and end this journey?
- b) What region is the town of Philippi located in?
- c) Is this region ☐ north or ☐ south of Greece?

