

Connected

Acts 16:1-5

Pierre Cannings

I. Pick Up vs. 1-2

- a. After Paul and Barnabas Separated
 - i. Paul and Silas stay committed
- b. Came to Derbe and Lystra
 - i. Derbe - Acts briefly mentions Derbe as part of Paul's itinerary but gives no details (Acts 16:1), emphasizing instead Paul's finding Timothy in the next town, Lystra. If Paul indeed had passed through Tarsus, Derbe would have been another 100 miles (160 km) to the west—an arduous journey over a mountainous region that might have taken more than a week
 - ii. Lystra - In Acts 16:1–2, Paul returns to Lystra to encourage new believers there. Paul initiates his ministry in Lystra by healing a man who had been lame from birth (Acts 14:8–11)
- c. Disciple Timothy
 - i. Disciple- to walk behind, follow, but in Acts refers to Christian. (All these factors enable us to conclude that the use in Acts goes back to the common name by which Palestinian Christians called themselves. Probably Timothy was about eighteen years of age, a convert of Paul's former visit a few years before (1 Tim. 1:2) and still young twelve years later (1 Tim. 4:12) At Lystra they found a disciple by the name of Timothy. Evidently Timothy's conversion dated back to Paul and Barnabas's first witness in that city (cf. 14:20) Nothing is said of him on the occasion of Paul's first visit to this area (14:8–20, 21); one may guess therefore that he had not been converted by Paul, though Paul evidently thought well of him, and in 1 Cor. 4:17 speaks of him as his child.
 1. Mom Jewish Believer Timothy's mother too was a Christian (according to 2 Tim. 1:5 her name was Eunice); his father was not ("Ελλην here means simply *non-Jew*, not specifically Greek).
 - a. The author of 2 Timothy, preserving what is probably historically reliable tradition, names his mother as Eunice and his grandmother as Lois, both of whom are described as Christian believers (1:5). Timothy's mother did not have him circumcised (Acts 16:3). This together with her marriage to a (nonbelieving?) gentile suggests that Timothy, living in the Diaspora, did not grow up in a pious or strictly observant Jewish home (although see 2 Tim 3:15)

- b. The statement that Timothy's mother (Eunice by name, according to 2 Tim. 1:5) had married a Gentile suggests that there was less rigid social segregation among the Jews of central Asia Minor than among those of Palestine. In Phrygia, says Ramsay, "there can be little doubt that the Jews married into the dominant families"
 - 2. Father Greek- Their marriage therefore was in Jewish law illegal (see StrB 2:741, quoting Jebamoth 45b). The same passage makes the point that, in mixed marriages, the child followed the nationality of the mother.
 - a. According to Acts Timothy was a native of Lystra in Asia Minor (16:1, 2), the son of a Jewish woman and a Greek father (16:1). Because of the matrilineal principle of descent, Timothy would have been considered a Jew,
 - b. The marriage of a Jewish woman to a non-Jew was considered a nonlegal marriage; and in all instances of nonlegal marriages, the lineage of the child was reckoned through the mother
 - ii. Well Spoken of
 - 1. **Spoken** - *be well spoken of, be approved*
 - 2. By the Brethren- μαρτυρεῖσθαι in the sense of *having a good reputation with* is common in Acts (6:3; 10:22; 16:2; 22:12). Timothy was well spoken of by *the brothers*, that is, *the Christians*

II. Prepare v. 3

- a. Go with Him
 - i. *Paul wished him [Timothy] to go with him.* 1 Thess. 1:1; 3:2, 6 are sufficient to show that a man called Timothy accompanied Paul on the 'second missionary journey' and assisted in a mission that included Macedonia.
 - ii. *A missionary associate, fellow worker, and trusted emissary of Paul* over an extended period of time. Timothy is mentioned after Paul in the prescript of various Pauline letters as a cosender of those letters (1 Thess 1:1; 2 Cor 1:1; Phil 1:1; Philemon 1; cf. also 2 Thess 1:1; Col 1:1). He is variously identified as "our brother" (1 Thess 3:2; 2 Cor 1:1; Philemon 1), as "fellow worker" (1 Thess 3:2; Rom 16:21), and as Paul's "beloved and faithful child in the Lord" (1 Cor 4:17; cf. 1 Tim 1:2) who enjoys a special relationship with this apostle (Phil 2:20–22; cf. 1 Tim 1:2, 18; 2 Tim 1:2; 2:1). Many interpreters also see the phrase "apostles of Christ" (1 Thess 2:6) as including Timothy along with Paul (and Silas).
 - iii. *Timothy* is to play an important part in Acts (16:1; 17:14, 15; 18:5; 19:22; 20:4) and in the Pauline letters (Rom. 16:21; 1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10; 2 Cor.

1:1, 19; Phil. 1:1; 2:19; Col. 1:1; 1 Thess. 1:1; 3:2, 6; 2 Thess. 1:1; 1 Tim. 1:2, 18; 6:20; 2 Tim. 1:2; Philemon 1; cf. Heb. 13:23).

iv. Timothy along with Silas (= Silvanus) accompanied Paul through Asia Minor to Troas and then went over to Macedonia. At Philippi they became involved in conflict (Acts 16:6–40; 1 Thess 2:2); however, Paul and Silas are the only ones mentioned as having been brought before the magistrate.

b. Circumcised

i. Paul had Timothy circumcised, thus regularizing his religious status and hence making him fully acceptable and more effective as Paul's co-worker to the Jews of his native area and elsewhere.

ii. And a bare possibility must remain that Luke was right; that Paul, confronted with a companion who was half Gentile and half Jew, decided to 'make an honest Jew of him

iii. It was Timothy's mixed parentage that made Paul decide to circumcise him before taking him along as his junior colleague. By Jewish law Timothy was a Jew, because he was the son of a Jewish mother, but because he was uncircumcised he was technically an apostate Jew. If Paul wished to maintain his links with the synagogue, he could not be seen to countenance apostasy

iv. That, however, is to overlook the fact that Galatians was written to Gentiles and Timothy was considered a Jew. There was no question of circumcising Gentiles. The Jerusalem Conference agreed on that. Gentiles would not be required to become Jews in order to be Christians.

v. Thus Paul had Timothy circumcised. Paul always worked through the Jewish synagogues where possible. To have had a member of his entourage be of Jewish lineage and yet uncircumcised would have hampered his effectiveness among the Jews.

III. Pass On vs. 4-5

a. Delivering Decrees

i. Decrees - **Decrees- a formal statement concerning rules or regulations that are to be observed** of formalized sets of rules *ordinance, decision, command*

ii. From Jerusalem- Acts 15

1. aimed at making possible harmonious common meals at which both Jewish and Gentile Christians might unite, rather ordinances that must be observed by those who wish to be members of the group that ordains them.

iii. Them to Observe **Observe- to continue to keep a law or commandment from being broken**

- b. So the church
 - i. Strengthened - **to cause to become firmer in such matters as conviction or commitment, *strengthen***
 - ii. Increased in Number- reminiscent of the summaries that punctuate the earlier parts of Acts (2:42–47; 4:32–35; 5:12–16; 6:7; 9:31).
 - iii. This verse should probably be regarded as Luke’s conclusion of the paragraph that began at 15:1.