
Paul's Second Journey: Jesus the Messiah and the Resurrection of the Dead

SCOTT HOEZEE

Much though most people enjoy traveling, we also know that long trips can be exhausting. Surely, this was something that the Apostle Paul and his companions knew a lot about. As we will see on this *Groundwork* program, when Paul hit the road for what we call his second missionary journey, it was a very long and interesting road indeed; and the trip had its shares of ups and downs, too. So, stay tuned as we hear these fascinating stories from the book of Acts.

DARRELL DELANEY

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I am Scott Hoezee; and Darrell, we are in, now, the third program of a five-part series on the three major missionary journeys of the Apostle Paul; and as we have noted, essentially those travels occupy the second half of the book of Acts, where all these stories are recorded for us by Luke. Our first program covered the first missionary journey. The second program wasn't on a journey, but on a vital meeting of the apostles in Jerusalem, where they settled an important issue concerning whether Gentiles had to essentially become Jews before they could also become Christians, and the answer of the Jerusalem Council was: No, they don't.

DARRELL DELANEY

It was a resounding "No!" because the Holy Spirit had fell on both Jews and Gentiles alike, which shows what God has been saying all along, that he is no respecter of persons; and we know that Luke is not one of the disciples of Jesus, but he was a historian, and so, with the book of Luke and with the book of Acts, it makes up the bulk of the New Testament that we find ourselves reading; and this story is in it.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; so, Luke...tradition has it he was also a physician, but with a real literary and historical flair, as it turns out. So, on this second missionary journey, Darrell, we have quite the task before us. Our passages today are almost three full chapters, from the end of Acts 15 through to almost the end of Acts 18. We are not going to be able to get everything into this program, but we will do our best. But you know, Darrell, even more than in the first missionary journey of Paul, the second one is going to take us to a lot of familiar sounding places.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; so, we will be hearing about the places where Paul planted churches, because in the first missionary journey, he went some places; in the second one he went to some more places, like Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth and Ephesus; and because Paul wrote the majority of the New Testament, with thirteen letters in the New Testament, you are going to see a lot of these places where he ended up, and that is why the letters are going back to those churches where he planted those places.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; just with these four cities alone, in Greece and Turkey...so, right; Paul wrote thirteen letters; six of them include the places that are going to be second-missionary-journey stops. You know, we've got 1 and 2 Corinthians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, Philippians, Ephesians...interesting; but curiously enough, Darrell, this second missionary journey begins on a sour note. Let's listen to the end of Acts 15.

³⁶Some time later Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us go back and visit the believers in all the towns where we preached the word of the Lord and see how they are doing." ³⁷Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, ³⁸but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. ³⁹They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, ⁴⁰but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord. ⁴¹He went through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; so, it is really interesting how Luke keeps this in the passage, where Paul and Barnabas are having this dispute; and I am really thankful that we don't have a dispute-free church, because of a lot of different disagreements that we could have; but they are actually trying to figure out who to take with them when they go on the missionary journey to continue to spread the gospel and plant these seeds; and they come into this disagreement.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; Luke is good at giving us a warts-and-all picture of the early Church. He didn't scrub the stories clean of the unhappy stuff; and so, here Paul and Barnabas...good friends...they are disagreeing over this person named John Mark, and it was sharp enough that they split. Paul went one direction with Silas and Barnabas headed the other way with John Mark; and you know, I guess, Darrell, it is a reminder...you know, the Church of Jesus has always been a mix of deep holiness and human foibles and difficulties...good news is the Spirit works nonetheless, and Paul going his way probably accomplished...we know he accomplished great things. Barnabas went his way; I am sure he accomplished some good things; but yes, it is a very human picture there at the end of Acts 15.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; and I like the fact that it is left in there, so that we can see that, okay, the Church has its disagreements. We can have disagreements with one another. We can even have sharp disputes with one another; but the Holy Spirit can still find ways to use us and to grow his Church in spite of our foibles...in spite of our challenges; and I am really encouraged to see that they left that in there.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, now we move into Acts 16. We think, by the way, Darrell, that Luke tagged along with Paul and Silas because he keeps talking in the first person plural: *We* did...*we* did. So, Luke seems to be in on the action here. So, he is recording this time stuff he witnessed in person. They stop at Lystra and Derbe, and that was where they stopped on the first missionary journey; and we are also introduced to the character of Timothy; and you know, Paul would later write two letters to Timothy when he later ministered in Ephesus. So, in a sense, this section of Acts introduces eight of Paul's thirteen epistles. So, a lot going on here.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; there is a lot going on; and actually, there is more going on in the story, too, because the narrative is going to take a turn here in Acts 16, where it reads: ⁸So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. ⁹During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰After 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. ¹¹From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. ¹²From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, we noted in the first program of this series that Lystra and Derbe are in modern-day Turkey; but now Paul receives this vision, which is kind of become a famous...the Macedonian call...come over and help us. So, now they set sail across the Aegean Sea and they arrive in Greece, and first off to the town of Philippi. We are going to meet a woman there whose name will occur in some other stories: Lydia; and of course, we know Paul plants a church there, and later he will write one of his warmest of all letters to that church.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; but obviously all of this is going on and it is really good that they are getting the vision and everything, but not everything is smooth sailing as we continue reading. It says: ¹⁶Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortunetelling. ¹⁷She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.” ¹⁸She kept this up for many days. Finally, Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” At that moment the spirit left her. ¹⁹When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities.

SCOTT HOEZEE

In the next program, we are going to see something similar. The economic impact of the gospel, we could call it. They cast the spirit out of this woman, and though it may have been a *bad* spirit, it actually did let her somehow foretell the future. But I like it that, you know, they didn’t heal her of this possession because they had such compassion. Paul just got sick of her talking. It is like he was annoyed, so he said, you know: Get out! So, the apostles end up being beaten, arrested, thrown into jail; but interestingly, their faith remained steadfast; in fact, so much so that we are told that into the wee hours of the morning, while they are in jail...while they are probably in shackles...Paul and Silas were actually singing hymns together in their jail cell. Then there is an earthquake, an intervention from God that frees all the men: The doors go open, the chains fall off; and then we read this, Acts 16:27:

The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. ²⁸But Paul shouted, “Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!” ²⁹The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” ³¹They replied, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.”

That is exactly, Darrell, what the jailer and his whole family do.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; it is a beautiful conversion moment that happens in the midst of the trials; so, not only do they receive this hard time during their persecution, but they end up worshipping God, and God intervenes, and now the jailer and his whole family become saved as a result of that. So, we see that Paul and Silas are actually going through this situation where their fate has been changed, even though they didn’t see it coming.

SCOTT HOEZEE

But the next day the authorities decide to drop the charges, and then the authorities discover that both Paul and Silas are actual Roman citizens, and not only do they drop the charges, they even get an apology for their rough treatment.

That is a lot, but we are only just getting started on this second missionary journey, so stay tuned.

Segment 2

DARRELL DELANEY

I am Darrell Delaney with Scott Hoezee, and you are listening to *Groundwork*.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And let's just jump right back in and dig into the text now in Acts 17: When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. ²As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, ³explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Messiah," he said. ⁴Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and quite a few prominent women.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, we see Paul when he goes into a new town, it is his custom to go into the Jewish synagogue and preach this Word. It is a new Word for them because now their message is connected to Jesus being the Messiah, who had to suffer and rise from the dead. So, he is preaching death, burial and resurrection in every synagogue that he goes to. Sometimes they hear him, sometimes they don't hear him, but it is his custom.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly, exactly; and some were persuaded, including the Jews and Greeks...and interesting...prominent women Luke mentions. I am not sure why he mentions that. We are in Thessalonica, that will get two letters from Paul eventually, and by the way, scholars...this is just an aside...scholars think that 1 Thessalonians is the earliest letter of Paul's that we possess. So, it is possible he wrote to the church he founded in Thessalonica not too many years after the story we just read. But, Darrell, for every up on these journeys, there is a down; and for all the people who are converted by Paul's preaching there are people who are outright hostile.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; picking up at verse 5, it says: But other Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. ⁶But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, ⁷and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus." ⁸When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. ⁹Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go. ¹⁰As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. ¹¹Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. ¹²As a result, many of them believed.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Interesting turn in the story. You know, Darrell, you have to give credit to the people who were accusing Paul, Silas, and this interesting character named Jason. I mean, the people who make the accusations were right. These guys *were* saying there is another Lord and King, and it is not the Caesar in Rome. We have noted this before on *Groundwork* programs, you know. Caesar fancied himself...and this was even inscribed on most Roman coins that bore the Caesar's image. He was *deos et dominos*—the god and the lord of the world—but Paul says: Not so fast. There is only one God and Lord, and his name is Jesus, the Son of God, who had been resurrected from the dead, ascended into heaven, and now rules the world and the kingdoms of this world as the one true King.

So, there is a true King; it is not Caesar; so the people who made that accusation are right.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; so, when Jesus is named as God and Lord, it is a political statement. It is a countercultural statement as well. So, our allegiance is not to yourself, your self-imposed deity...whoever you think you are, Caesar. No; our allegiance is to Jesus, who is the Lord and the God...the real Lord and the God; and that becomes a political problem. So, there could be times when you stand up for Jesus and it flies in the face of the status

quo. It really could happen.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; it is a good reminder, as you just said; it is countercultural; and it is today, too. It is just as countercultural today for us to say Jesus is Lord as it was back then, because everybody else who thinks that they are the lord and master of the universe, they are wrong about that. So, our gospel proclamation of faith in Jesus as Lord, yes, it is going to fly in the face of some things in our culture; and sometimes people are not going to like it, and it has always been that way. We shouldn't be surprised; sometimes we are. You know, sometimes people are so surprised that we don't have more of a Christian culture. It is like it has never really been that way. It certainly wasn't in the early Church, that is for sure.

In any event, Darrell, we are now in a place called Berea.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; so, Berea...I know that there is a denomination...a church denomination called Berean Bible Church. The Bereans were serious students of the Word. I love that part, where there were some people who I know that admire this fact that they were searching the scriptures to examine to see what Paul was saying: Is it in the Word, what he is saying? And it has been an encouragement; and some people have used this as kind of a model, like: Be a Berean; or whatnot. But the idea is not to be a Berean; the idea is to study the scriptures and examine them to make sure that you are hearing good preaching from the Word, to make sure it is in there; and so, that is kind of the example that these Bereans left.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Well, it is interesting because one of the things we know that happened in Jesus' day and ministry was that because he was humble, because he suffered, because he was killed in a sacrifice, people said: Well, he cannot be the Messiah then. The Messiah is going to be a real strong political lord. I mean, he is not...he is going to be a politically driven new Israel; so, he cannot be suffering and he cannot die. The Bible said he will be humble; he will suffer; he will die; he will rise again. So, they said: Wait a minute; let's go back to Isaiah. We have to check it again. Somebody get me the Isaiah scroll. So, it is like: Oh, yeah; we missed it. It was there all along; Paul is right.

Interesting, but let's get back to Acts 17. After they leave Berea, they head straight to the Greek capital city of Athens, where Paul has a very famous encounter at the Areopagus, or Mars Hill. Let's listen in on this part in Acts 17: ^{19b}“May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? ²⁰You are bringing some strange ideas to our ears, and we would like to know what they mean.” ²¹(All the Athenians and the foreigners who lived there spent their time doing nothing but talking about and listening to the latest ideas.) ²²Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. ²³For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN God. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, Paul knows that these guys are debating new ideas every day. That is kind of what they do in this area...the Areopagus, where Mars Hill is...and he uses this opportunity, *to an unknown god*, to bring the gospel out. He really wants to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ; and so, that is a really powerful opportunity he sees in the moment there.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; that was an open door he had to walk through, and he did; and they listened quite intently right until Paul said that this Lord...this man...had been raised from the dead; and that is when he lost them. Verse 32: When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, “We will hear you again on this subject.” ³³At that, Paul left the Council. ³⁴Some of the people became followers of Paul and believed. Among them was Dionysius, a member of the Areopagus, also a woman named Damaris, and a number of others.

The Greeks, of course, thought death was the release from the prison house of the body, so nobody wanted to get a body back. So, they just couldn't go along with the resurrection; but nevertheless, the gospel got through. Well, again, covering a lot of ground here, but we have more to go in Acts 18, so stay tuned.

Segment 3

DARRELL DELANEY

You are listening to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I am Scott Hoezee; we started at Acts 15; we covered 16 and 17; now we are going to cover most of 18 in this final segment of this program; and Darrell, let's listen in to Acts 18.

DARRELL DELANEY

It says: After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth. ²There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome. Paul went to see them, ³and because he was a tentmaker as they were, he stayed and worked with them. ⁴Every Sabbath he reasoned in the synagogue, trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. ⁵When Silas and Timothy came from Macedonia, Paul devoted himself exclusively to preaching, testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah. ⁶But when they opposed Paul and became abusive, he shook out his clothes in protest and said to them, "Your blood be on your own heads! I am innocent of it. From now on I will go to the Gentiles."

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, now, Darrell, we have arrived in another famous city, and Paul will plant a church there that will later receive multiple letters from Paul, and that is Corinth. I say multiple letters...we only have two that survived, but we know that there were more than two...at least three, maybe four letters that Paul wrote, and they wrote him some letters. So, we are in Corinth, but not smooth sailing here either; and you know, Darrell, I think sometimes people think that when you are an apostle like Paul, you never get discouraged...you never need a boost. You know, Paul, Silas, Timothy...no; it is not true. They were as human as the rest of us. They did need encouragement; and on this occasion, the Lord God provides it. Here is Acts 18:9. This is a lovely passage, I think.

One night the Lord spoke to Paul in a vision: "Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. ¹⁰For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city." ¹¹So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God.

A lovely vignette there.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; it is beautiful because, I mean, God is providing encouragement; God is comforting Paul; and you know, some of us may or may not hear God speaking in this kind of voice, but we can hear from one another from the church, from our brothers and sisters in Christ that you are doing a good job; keep on hanging in there; I am praying for you. Whenever someone says to me they are praying for me, I feel encouraged; I feel wind in my sails; I feel like I could go out and face the day because I know somebody is there for me; they are holding me down and they are encouraging me. So, you know, God is doing that personally in Paul's situation with such intense persecution; he wants to make sure Paul knows he is not forgotten.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; that is lovely. You know, Paul, of course, was not there when Jesus gave the Great Commission, where he promised: I am with you. So, here he gets that promise made personally. You know, the theologian Augustine once said that God loves each of us as if we were an only child. That is a lovely line from Augustine; and indeed, he does; and in this case, he gives Paul the boost and the encouragement that he needs, even as you just said, Darrell, he did for us; but a year and a half! That is probably the longest time that Paul spent anywhere. I think that is probably true.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; he did spend two years in Antioch before, in Acts 13, when they sent them off, but one and a half years here in Corinth is still quite a long time; and I mean, of course, when Paul writes these letters, because he spent so much time with them, I am assuming that he could address a lot of the issues in those letters.

SCOTT HOEZEE

What strikes me is that precisely because he was in Corinth for a really long time, it is surprising that not long after the left, everything unraveled. You know, 1 Corinthians, we know is a reply letter to a letter the Corinthians had sent to Paul, which had a list as long as your arm of controversies and arguments and terrible things going on in Corinth that Paul had to correct in 1 Corinthians. So, you would think that Paul, having spent so much time there, they would have emerged more unified; but again, Luke, the New Testament, isn't shy about admitting that, you know, the early Church had its share of difficulties just like we do today.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; it is ironic to me, because he starts out by calling them saints and saying they have no lack of any spiritual gifts. Then he lays into them: Okay, now about the things you wrote about...the things you asked me about; and he addresses these different issues, which lets me know that the Church had not been perfect then; the Church is not perfect now; and we still have opportunities to work through our challenges and our differences with the help of the Spirit.

SCOTT HOEZEE

But as Paul gets ready to leave Greece and head back to where he started in Antioch of Syria, he gets back to Turkey...the modern-day Turkey...and they arrive, we are told in Acts 18:19: They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila. He himself went into the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews.²⁰ When they asked him to spend more time with them, he declined.²¹ But as he left, he promised, "I will come back if it is God's will." Then he set sail from Ephesus.²² When he landed at Caesarea, he went up to Jerusalem and greeted the church and then went down to Antioch. So, Ephesus, another famous city...a famous church plant that will receive a letter from Paul some years later.

DARRELL DELANEY

This is one of the most beautiful prayers that he prays for the Ephesian church, and we find it in Ephesians Chapter 3. It says: ¹⁴For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp now wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. ²⁰Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹to him be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Amen indeed; and I think, Darrell, that is a good way to round out this program on Paul's very busy but very blessed second missionary journey. We said at the beginning of the first program in this series that we are...you know, we are looking at these travels, not just out of historical curiosity or because Luke tells the story so well, but these are living stories, Darrell. These can nourish our own faith, even yet today, because we know that the Holy Spirit is just as busy working through and blessing Christ's Church, warts and all though it is, just as busy today as in these stories from Acts 15-18; and as Jesus personally told Paul that night in Corinth, he is with us; and for that, we give thanks to God now, and forever.

DARRELL DELANEY

Well, thanks for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We are your hosts, Darrell Delaney with Scott Hoezee, and we hope you will join us again next time as we study and learn from Paul's third missionary journey recorded in Acts Chapters 18-21.

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SCOTT HOEZEE

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