

Notes on the Greek New Testament
Day 175 – June 24th – Acts 15:36-16:15

Works frequently referenced in these notes on Acts

Bruce, FF, *The Acts of the Apostles*, London, 2nd ed. 1952

Polhill, John B, *Acts: The New American Commentary*, Nashville, 1992

Stott, John R W, *The Message of Acts*, IVP (The Bible Speaks Today), Leicester, 1990

Verse 36

Μετὰ δὲ τινὰς ἡμέρας εἶπεν πρὸς Βαρναβᾶν Παῦλος· Ἐπιστρέψαντες δὲ ἐπισκεψώμεθα τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς κατὰ πόλιν πᾶσαν ἐν αἷς κατηγγείλαμεν τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου, πῶς ἔχουσιν.

τινας Pronoun, m & f acc pl τις
ἐπιστρέφω turn back, return
δη indeed, then, therefore, now

δη reinforcing the preceding hortatory subjunctive

ἐπισκεψώμεθα Verb, aor midd dep subj, 1 pl
ἐπισκεπτομαι visit, care for

Often in the sense of visiting one for whom one has some responsibility

κατηγγείλαμεν Verb, aor act indic, 1 pl
καταγγελλω proclaim, preach

πῶς ἔχουσιν an idiom meaning, 'how they are doing'

Verse 37

Βαρναβᾶς δὲ ἐβούλετο συμπαραλαβεῖν καὶ τὸν Ἰωάννην τὸν καλούμενον Μᾶρκον·

ἐβούλετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s
βουλομαι want, wish

συμπαραλαβεῖν Verb, aor act infin
συμπαραλαμβανω take/bring along with

Verse 38

Παῦλος δὲ ἤξιον, τὸν ἀποστάντα ἀπ' αὐτῶν ἀπὸ Παμφυλίας καὶ μὴ συνελθόντα αὐτοῖς εἰς τὸ ἔργον, μὴ συμπαραλαμβάνειν τοῦτον.

ἄξιον consider worthy, think (something) best

ἀποστάντα Verb, aor act ptc, m acc s
ἀφισταμαι leave, go away, desert

μὴ συνελθόντα ... τοῦτον completes the verb phrase Παυλος δε ἤξιου, the intervening words describing the object now emphatically indicated in the τουτον with which the sentence concludes.

Note also the change of tense, Moulton says "Barnabas, with easy forgetfulness of risk, wishes συμπαραλαβεῖν Mark – Paul refuses συμπαραλαμβάνειν, to have with them day to day one who had shown himself unreliable." On the incident referred to cf. 13:13.

Verse 39

ἐγένετο δὲ παροξυσμὸς ὥστε ἀποχωρισθῆναι αὐτοὺς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων, τὸν τε Βαρναβᾶν παραλαβόντα τὸν Μᾶρκον ἐκπλεῦσαι εἰς Κύπρον,

παροξυσμος, ου m sharp disagreement

"It is a tribute to Luke's honesty that he should describe a quarrel between two apostles in so strong a term. Probably family-feeling influenced Barnabas to some extent; Mark was his cousin (Col 4:10)" Bruce

ὥστε so that, with the result that
ἀποχωρισθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin
ἀποχωρίζομαι separate

ἀλλήλων, οἱς, οὐς reciprocal pronoun one another

παραλαβόντα Verb, aor act ptc, m acc s

παραλαμβάνω take, accept

ἐκπλεῦσαι Verb, aor act infin ἐκπλεω sail, set sail

If it was not apparent to these two men which of them was in the right and which in the wrong, we should be very careful before seeking to pass judgement on the matter ourselves.

But note: the blessing of God attended both groups. Mark is later spoken of as a valued helper of Paul (Col 4:10; 2 Tim 4:11). We owe to him a significant proportion of the Gospel accounts, and maybe even Luke, the friend of Paul, owed much to Mark for his record of Christ's life.

Concerning Paul and Silas, God used this pair, and seems, in the provision of Timothy, to have made up the loss of Mark even as Silas made up the loss of Barnabas.

Maybe God purposed through the unfortunate circumstance of this quarrel to increase his missionary workforce – just as the first 'missionaries' had gone out from Jerusalem only through the unfortunate circumstance of persecution.

Verse 40

Παῦλος δὲ ἐπιλεξάμενος Σιλᾶν ἐξῆλθεν παραδοθεὶς τῇ χάριτι τοῦ κυρίου ὑπὸ τῶν ἀδελφῶν,

ἐπιλεξάμενος Verb, aor midd ptc, m nom s
ἐπιλεγω call, name; midd choose
παραδοθεὶς Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom s
παραδίδωμι hand over, deliver up

Cf. 14:26

Verse 41

διήρχετο δὲ τὴν Συρίαν καὶ τὴν Κιλικίαν ἐπιστηρίζων τὰς ἐκκλησίας.

διέρχομαι pass through, go through
ἐπιστηρίζω strengthen

"Since the 'apostolic decrees' were originally addressed to all the churches in Syria and Cilicia (15:23), one would assume that Paul and Silas shared these with them. This is all the more likely since Silas was one of the two originally appointed by the Jerusalem church to deliver the decrees." Polhill

Acts 16:1

Κατήνησεν δὲ καὶ εἰς Δέρβην καὶ εἰς Λύστραν. καὶ ἰδοὺ μαθητῆς τις ἦν ἐκεῖ ὀνόματι Τιμόθεος, υἱὸς γυναικὸς Ἰουδαίας πιστῆς, πατρὸς δὲ Ἑλλήνος,

κατανταῶ come, arrive, reach

Note the singular denoting Paul as the leader.

μαθητῆς, ου m disciple, pupil, follower
ἐκεῖ there, in that place
πιστος, η, ον faithful, believing

Cf. 2 Tim 1:5. "That a Jewess married a Gentile reflects a less exclusive standard than in Palestine." Bruce

Verse 2

ὃς ἐμαρτυρεῖτο ὑπὸ τῶν ἐν Λύστροις καὶ Ἰκονίῳ ἀδελφῶν·

μαρτυρεῶ bear witness; pass be well spoken of

Verse 3

τοῦτον ἠθέλησεν ὁ Παῦλος σὺν αὐτῷ ἐξελεῖν, καὶ λαβὼν περιέτεμεν αὐτὸν διὰ τοὺς Ἰουδαίους τοὺς ὄντας ἐν τοῖς τόποις ἐκεῖνοις, ἦδεισαν γὰρ ἅπαντες ὅτι Ἑλλήν ὁ πατὴρ αὐτοῦ ὑπῆρχεν.

θελω wish, will

λαβων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s λαμβανω
περιέτεμεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s περιτεμενω
circumcise

Paul was ready to regularise Timothy's status as a Jew by having him circumcised – probably to avoid unnecessary offence concerning Timothy's ministry. "That he did so is striking, in view of such passages as Gal 2:3; 5:3 etc., but Timothy's was an exceptional case. Paul's readiness to conciliate Jewish opinion is seen elsewhere in Ac., e.g., 21:26; cf. 1 Cor 9:19-22 for his justification of such action." Bruce. The situation is very different from that in Galatians where Gentiles were being taught that circumcision was essential to their salvation and to them being truly part of the people of God.

τοπος, ου m place

ἦδεισαν Verb, pluperf act indic, 3 pl οἶδα
(verb perf in form but with present meaning) know, understand

ἅπας, ασα, αν (alternative form of πας) all, whole; pl everyone, everything

ὑπαρχω be (equivalent to εἰμι)

Bruce says that the tense probably indicates that his father was dead.

Verse 4

ὡς δὲ διεπορεύοντο τὰς πόλεις, παρεδίδοσαν αὐτοῖς φυλάσσειν τὰ δόγματα τὰ κεκριμένα ὑπὸ τῶν ἀποστόλων καὶ πρεσβυτέρων τῶν ἐν Ἱεροσολύμοις.

διαπορευομαι go or travel through

παραδίδωμι see 15:40

φυλλασσω keep, observe

δογμα, τος n rule, regulation

κεκριμένα Verb, perf pass ptc, n nom/acc pl
κρινω

πρεσβυτερος, α, ον elder

I.e. they passed on the decision of the council and the letter.

Bruce thinks that Paul's letter to the Galatians was written before the council of Jerusalem, and that the passing on of the council's decisions confirmed what he had previously written to them.

Verse 5

αὶ μὲν οὖν ἐκκλησίαι ἐστερεοῦντο τῇ πίστει καὶ ἐπερίσσευον τῷ ἀριθμῷ καθ' ἡμέραν.

στερεοω make strong, strengthen

πίστει Noun, dat s πιστις, εως f faith, belief,
the Christian faith

περισσευω increase

ἀριθμος, ου m number, total

"The third of six brief reports of progress, cf. 6:7; 9:31." Bruce

Verse 6

Διήλθον δὲ τὴν Φρυγίαν καὶ Γαλατικὴν χώραν,
κωλυθέντες ὑπὸ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος λαλήσαι
τὸν λόγον ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ,

Γαλατικός, η, ου Galatian

Bruce follows Ramsay in suggesting that this refers to the part of Phrygia which belonged to the Roman province of Galatia, the region apparently known as Phrygia Galatica, in which Pisidian Antioch and probably Iconium were situated.

χώρα, ας f country, region

κωλυθέντες Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom pl

κωλυω hinder, prevent, forbid

Ἀσία The name is used here in its pre-Roman restricted sense, being applied to a region bounded on the north by Mysia, on the south by Caria and on the east by Phrygia.

"The original plan had probably been to go to Ephesus. When Paul was forbidden to preach in Asia, he travelled northwards from Pisidian Antioch and, crossing the Sultan Dagh range, went north until he arrived near the Bithynian border. Here he might either go north to Nicomedia, or turn west to Troas." Bruce

Verse 7

ἐλθόντες δὲ κατὰ τὴν Μυσίαν ἐπείραζον εἰς
τὴν Βιθυνίαν πορευθῆναι καὶ οὐκ εἴασεν
αὐτοὺς τὸ πνεῦμα Ἰησοῦ·

κατὰ τὴν Μυσίαν i.e. opposite the eastern border of Mysia.

πειραζω test, tempt, attempt

εἴασεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s εἰω allow, permit

"How was the prohibition conveyed? Perhaps by inward motion, perhaps by vision (cf v.9), but most probably by prophetic utterance of one of the party (cf 20:23; 21:4, 11)." Bruce

Verse 8

παρελθόντες δὲ τὴν Μυσίαν κατέβησαν εἰς
Τρωάδα.

παρελθόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl

παρερχομαι pass, pass by

"They could not get to Troas without passing through Mysia; but παρελθοντες may be used here instead of διελθοντες to indicate that they did not stay to preach in Mysia." Bruce

Verse 9

καὶ ὄραμα διὰ νυκτὸς τῷ Παύλῳ ὄφθη, ἀνὴρ
Μακεδῶν τις ἦν ἐστὼς καὶ παρακαλῶν αὐτὸν
καὶ λέγων· Διαβὰς εἰς Μακεδονίαν βοήθησον
ἡμῖν.

ὄραμα, τος n vision, sight

Cf. 9:10,12; 10:3,17; 18:9; 22:17 for other references to visions.

νύξ, νυκτος f night

ὄφθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s ὄρω see, observe; pass appear

His message made plain that he was a Macedonian.

ἐστὼς Verb, perf act ptc, m nom s ἵστημι stand, stand firm

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, beg

διαβὰς Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s διαβαινω cross, cross over

Macedonia had been the dominant power in Greece in the fourth century BC under Philip and Alexander.

βοήθησον Verb, aor act imperat, 2 s βοηθεω help

Verse 10

ὡς δὲ τὸ ὄραμα εἶδεν, εὐθέως ἐζητήσαμεν
ἐξελεθεῖν εἰς Μακεδονίαν, συμβιβάζοντες ὅτι
προσκέκληται ἡμᾶς ὁ θεὸς εὐαγγελίσασθαι
αὐτούς.

εἶδεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s ὄρω

ζητεω seek, attempt

Note the plural ἐζητησαμεν. This is the beginning of the first 'we' section which continues to verse 17 and suggests that Luke joined Paul, Silas and Timothy at Troas.

συμβιβαζω bring together, infer, decide

προσκέκληται Verb, perf midd/pass dep indic, 3 s προσκαλεομαι call to oneself, summon

Verse 11

Ἀναχθέντες οὖν ἀπὸ Τρωάδος
εὐθυδρομήσαμεν εἰς Σαμοθράκην, τῇ δὲ
ἐπιούσῃ εἰς Νέαν Πόλιν,

ἀναχθέντες Verb, aor pass ptc, m nom pl

ἀναγω midd or pass set sail

εὐθυδρομεω sail a straight (direct?) course

"I.e. before a favourable wind. Samothrace was a good day's sail from Troas, as was Neapolis from Samothrace. In 20:6 the reverse journey from Philippi to Troas took five days." Bruce

ἐπιουσα, ης f the next day

Νεαν Πολιν or Neapolis was the port of Philippi, about 10 miles distant. "The Via Egnatia from Dyrrhachium (mod Durazzo) reached the sea here, passing through Thessalonica, Amphipolis and Philippi. Luke likes to mention ports of arrival and departure (cf. 13:4), and the detailed account of this journey shows his interest in sea-itineraries, specially marked in the 'we' sections." Bruce

Verse 12

κάκειθεν εἰς Φιλίππους, ἣτις ἐστὶν πρώτη τῆς μερίδος Μακεδονίας πόλις, κολωνία. ἤμεν δὲ ἐν ταύτῃ τῇ πόλει διατρίβοντες ἡμέρας τινάς.

κάκειθεν and from there - formed from και ἐκειθεν

ὅστις, ἣτις, ὅ τι who, which
μερις, ἰδος f part, portion, share

Macedonia was divided into four administrative districts. Philippi is situated in the first of these but was not itself the capital of that district, a status which belonged to Amphipolis. Thessalonica was the capital of Macedonia as a whole. These circumstances account for the various textual variants of the phrase πρώτη της μεριδος...

One suggested amendment is to read πρώτης μεριδος της i.e. Philippi belongs to the first district of Macedonia. However, others (e.g. Ramsay) suggest that Luke speaks of Philippi as 'the leading city of its district of Macedonia' not because it was formally the capital but because it was the focus of Paul's missionary activity in that district – the chief city as far as Paul and his companions were concerned.

κολωνία a colony; a city under Roman law and government.

Other Roman colonies mentioned in Acts are Pisidian Antioch, Lystra, Troas, Ptolemais and Corinth.

διατρίβω remain, stay

Verse 13

τῇ τε ἡμέρᾳ τῶν σαββάτων ἐξήλθομεν ἔξω τῆς πύλης παρὰ ποταμὸν οὗ ἐνομιζομεν προσευχῆν εἶναι, καὶ καθίσαντες ἐλαλοῦμεν ταῖς συνελθούσαις γυναῖξιν.

ἔξω out, outside

πυλη, ης f gate, door

ποταμος, ου m river, stream

νομιζω think, suppose

οὗ ἐνομιζομεν προσευχην εἶναι 'where we thought that there would be a place of prayer.

καθίζω intrans sit down, sit

συνελθούσαις Verb, aor act ptc, f dat pl

συνερχομαι come together, meet

The place (or meeting) appears not to have had the status of a synagogue since there seem to have been mainly if not solely women present. A synagogue service normally required a minimum of ten men.

Verse 14

καὶ τις γυνὴ ὀνόματι Λυδία, πορφυρόπωλις πόλεως Θυατείρων σεβομένη τὸν θεόν, ἤκουεν, ἣς ὁ κύριος διήνοιξεν τὴν καρδίαν προσέχειν τοῖς λαλουμένοις ὑπὸ τοῦ Παύλου.

πορφυροπωλις, ἰδος f (woman) dealer in purple dye/cloth

Bruce suggests that Λυδία here means 'the Lydian woman' and comments that Lydiand were famed as traders in purple dye. He says that she may have had another personal name.

Θυατιρα, ων Thyatira

σεβομαι worship; ὁ σ. worshipper

Cf. Acts 10:2

διανοιγω open

προσεχω pay close attention to

Verse 15

ὡς δὲ ἐβαπτίσθη καὶ ὁ οἶκος αὐτῆς, παρεκάλεσεν λέγουσα· Εἰ κεκρίκατέ με πιστὴν τῷ κυρίῳ εἶναι, εἰσελθόντες εἰς τὸν οἶκόν μου μένετε· καὶ παρεβιάσατο ἡμᾶς.

καὶ ὁ οἶκος αὐτῆς "Lydia appears to have been the head of the house; we may conclude that she was unmarried or a widow. In that case her household would include servants and other dependents, perhaps some of the women of verse 13. For women in the Philippian church cf. Phil 4:2f." Bruce

παρακαλεω see v.9

Εἰ κεκρίκατέ με πιστὴν τῷ κυρίῳ εἶναι – not that she could doubt this since her baptism was testimony that she was so judged and was so to be estimated by all. Rather she uses this fact as the ground of her persuasion of Paul and of his team.

μενω remain, stay

παραβιάσατο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s

παραβιάζομαι urge, persuade

Having remarked on Lydia's probable wealth (cf. v. 40 which suggests that the church may have met in her house), Polhill continues, "Of all Paul's churches, the Philippians' generosity stood out. They continued to send him support in his missionary endeavours elsewhere (Phil 4:15-18; cf. 2 Cor 11:8). One is tempted to see Lydia as a principal contributor... Women like Lydia were particularly prominent in Paul's missionary efforts in this portion of Acts – the women of Thessalonica (17:4) and of Berea (17:12), Damaris in Athens (17:34), and Priscilla in Corinth (18:2). Priscilla and Lydia took an active role in the ministry of their churches."