

SPECIAL INTERLUDE

God's Demonstrated Priority On Accurately Expounding Scripture (Acts 16:6-10)

I. Introduction

- A. The Apostle Paul directed Timothy to "(d)o your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth," 2 Timothy 2:15 ESV.
- B. The need for accuracy in ministering God's Word is essential if we are to present truth versus watered-down truth, for watered-down truth can only eventually mislead the believer, undermining his faith.
- C. This lesson is so important in God's eyes, He emphasized it in an unusual way in Acts 16:6-10 for our insight:

II. God's Demonstrated Priority On Accurately Expounding Scripture, Acts 16:6-10.

- A. The Acts 16:6-10 passage is a good study in showing how God may choose to lead His servants in the current dispensation of the Church era by means of circumstances instead of written Scripture:
 - 1. God had called Paul and the other apostles to take Christ's Gospel to the world (Matthew 28:19-20), but when Paul had gone through the region of Phrygia visiting churches he had planted in his first missionary journey (Acts 15:36 with 16:6a), his team was forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach in Asia, Acts 16:6b.
 - 2. Not receiving any directive from the Lord as to where they should then go, Paul's team ventured north into Mysia (Acts 16:7a; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978, map 13: The Missionary Journeys of Paul) only there to be hindered by "the Spirit of Jesus" once again from trying to go on into Bithynia, *Ibid.*; Acts 16:7b NIV.
 - 3. That left one option -- going west to the seaport of Troas, so the team went there (Acts 16:8) and in Troas the Lord gave Paul the call to cross the sea to Macedonia in order to evangelize there, Acts 16:9-10.
- B. However, God **did** want the people in Asia, Mysia and Bithynia to be evangelized, for 1 Peter 1:1 indicates that later there were many believers scattered throughout those areas, for God had called the Church to disciple "all nations," what would have included the people living in those areas, Matthew 28:19-20.
- C. Accordingly, we need an explanation for **WHY** God *initially* directed Paul's missionary team **away from** Asia, **away from** Mysia and **away from** Bithynia that he might go down to Troas on the seacoast (Acts 16:6-8), and the answer in part is presented in Acts 16:9-10 within the greater New Testament context (as follows):
 - 1. Beginning in Acts 16:10, the author of the Book of Acts shifted from referring to Paul's team as "they" and began his first "we" section (Acts 16:10-40), the other one being Acts 20:5-28:31 (Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 351) where the beloved physician, Luke (Colossians 4:14) first joined Paul's team at Troas.
 - 2. This rendezvous between Paul and Luke was extremely important in view of later Church History:
 - a. Luke's Gospel and Book of Acts comprise nearly 28 % of the volume of the entire New Testament writings (*Ibid.*, B. K. C., N. T., p. 199), and Luke's writings record with great historical precision the spread and development of the Christian faith, what provides an invaluable apologetic for us today in defending the historicity of the rest of the writings of the New Testament, *Ibid.*, p. 350-351. [For example, in Acts 18:12, Luke mentions Gallio as the deputy of Achaia, and secular history shows Gallio held that office only in A. D. 51, giving evidence for the historical reality of Acts, *Ibid.*, Ryrie, fn. to Acts 18:12.]
 - b. Thus, it was critically important for the cause of Christ and the Christian faith that Luke meet Paul while Paul was still in missionary ministry, and to join Paul to become an eyewitness of God's miraculous work in Paul (cf. Acts 20:6-13 where Luke witnessed Paul raising Eutychus from the dead) since Luke had not been an eyewitness of the miracles or the life of Christ (Luke 1:1-4). Luke could later write over a quarter of the volume of the New Testament not only with his characteristic historical precision, but along with it, an invaluable deep personal conviction of the truthfulness in God's working in the Early Church era!
 - c. However, for Luke to meet Paul while he was still in his ministry, God had to postpone Paul's reaching huge swaths of people in Asia, Mysia and Bithynia, showing the great value the Lord put on establishing an effective apologetic of the faith for later generations by way of Luke's uniquely, precise way of writing!

Lesson: When God directed Timothy through Paul to do his best to handle Scripture accurately so as not to be ashamed before the Lord, He meant it **EMPHATICALLY** as is seen in God's postponing the evangelization of huge swaths of people that Paul might meet Luke and provide Luke with the exposure he needed to Paul's ministry to write his works of great apologetic value for later generations of the Church with moving personal conviction!

Application: May we take **SERIOUSLY** God's directive through Paul to Timothy as well as to us to **HANDLE** the Scriptures **ACCURATELY** that the faith of God's people be built on **DEFENSIBLE TRUTH** for their edification!