
a *Grace Notes* course

The Acts of the Apostles

an expositional study
by Warren Doud

Lesson 304: **Acts 16:1-12**

ACTS, Lesson 304, Acts 16:1-12

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Acts 16:1-12**Acts 16:1**

Then he came to Derbe and Lystra: and a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek:

In Acts 16:1-5, Luke introduces Timothy, who becomes one of Paul's fellow workers in the churches of the Mediterranean world.

The routes and geography of the apostle's travel are not described in detail, nor is there much information about Paul's reception in Derbe and Lystra. Instead, the development and growth of churches has the main emphasis.

Derbe

The most likely site of Derbe lies about 15 miles north northeast of the city of Karaman, Turkey (ancient Laranda) on a mound known as Kerti Hüyük. It is about 40 miles east of Lystra.

Derbe was a city of the Roman province of Asia located in the district of Lycaonia (Acts 14:6) in the province of Galatia. Derbe was the last city on Paul's first missionary journey (v 20), the first city on his second journey (16:1), and likely one city he revisited on his third journey (18:23). Gaius, one of Paul's missionary companions on his third journey, was from Derbe (20:4).

Lystra

Lystra was a city in the region of Lycaonia in the Roman province of Galatia. On Paul's first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas encountered opposition at Iconium and fled to Lystra, Derbe, and the surrounding region (Acts 14:6). While at Lystra, Paul healed a crippled man (14:8). This miracle excited the local crowd to cry out that Barnabas must be Jupiter, and that Paul was Mercury, because of his role as chief speaker (vv 9–21).

The town of Lystra was largely inhabited by the remnants of a small Anatolian tribe who spoke

their own dialect, attested today by a number of inscriptions found in the area and still spoken as late as the sixth century AD. Evidently the old Anatolian village system prevailed in this market town even when Roman rule was established there.

The Greek deities Zeus and Hermes were worshiped in that area, and archaeological evidence confirms Luke's picture in Acts. One inscription records the dedication to Zeus on a statue of Hermes. Another records a dedication to "Zeus before the town," throwing light on Acts 14:13 with its reference to the priest "of Zeus before the gate."

Geographically Derbe and Lystra both belonged to the same political region, while Iconium lay in another. Lystra was closer to Iconium than to Derbe geographically, commercially, and socially—in spite of the political boundary separating them. There was evidently a good deal of communication between the two towns.

a certain disciple was there, named Timothy

Lystra is probably the birthplace of Timothy, whose mother was a Jewess and whose father was a Greek. Luke notes that Timothy was a disciple, that is, a Christian, and that Timothy's mother was a believer. From another source we know that his mother, Eunice, and grandmother Lois demonstrated sincere faith and taught Timothy, from infancy, the Holy Scriptures (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15). Possibly, Eunice and Lois became Christians when Paul and Barnabas preached the gospel in Lystra on their first missionary journey. In turn, they instructed Timothy, who, despite his youth, was held in high regard by the believers in both Lystra and Iconium. Paul seems to have had personal knowledge of Timothy's family, for he mentions his mother and grandmother by name.

TOPIC: TIMOTHY

the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, but believed

Eunice (2 Tim. 1:5). Her Greek name points to some previous connection with Gentiles ; and,

had there not been such, she would scarcely have contracted one of those mixed marriages which were forbidden to Jews, or allowed her son to be uncircumcised.

She may have been a liberal-minded woman, looking beyond the letter and ceremonial of the Law to the deeper truths of revelation, and would have brought up her son in a way with which Paul would sympathize. With her lived her mother, Lois (2 Tim. 1:5), and they had trained the child carefully. He had from a babe known the sacred writings (2 Tim. 3:15).

but his father was a Greek

Evidently not a proselyte, otherwise he would have had Timothy circumcised according to Jewish law.

Acts 16:2

Who was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

Already Timothy's character and ministry were noticed by the Christians of the churches which Paul and Barnabas had established on their first visit.

How old was Timothy when Paul met him in Lystra? In his pastoral epistles, Paul admonishes Timothy not to take offense when people look down on him because of his youth (1 Tim. 4:12). Paul wrote his first epistle to Timothy after his release from Roman imprisonment, probably in A.D. 64. This is fourteen years after Timothy became Paul's travel companion in Lystra. If Timothy was about twenty years of age at that time, then he would still be regarded a young man when he served the church at Ephesus and received Paul's epistle. ¹

¹ Kistemaker, S. J., & Hendriksen, W. (1953-2001). *Vol. 17: New Testament commentary: Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles*.

Iconium

TOPIC: ICONIUM

Acts 16:4

Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

Him would Paul have to go forth with him

Luke often provides a detailed introduction to the people who are assets to the spread of the gospel. Perhaps Paul, on his previous journey to Lystra, had an interest in young Timothy, as a helper when he extended his mission work beyond Iconium.

The elders in Lystra and Iconium laid hands on Timothy and set him aside for preaching and teaching the gospel.

1 Timothy 1:18. This command I entrust to you, Timothy, my son, in accordance with the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you fight the good fight.

1 Timothy 4:44. Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery.

and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters

Timothy, who was considered a Jew because of his Jewish mother and grandmother, was not acceptable to the Jews in that area. They knew his father was Greek and that Timothy was uncircumcised. If both of his parents had been Gentiles, there would have been no difficulty, but as a half-Jew Timothy was obliged to submit to circumcision.

Without the mark of the covenant, Timothy could not be an effective missionary to Jews, so

to avoid opposition from Jews, Paul circumcised Timothy.²

Consider the various ministry issues Paul had to face on the question of circumcision.

First, the Jerusalem Council did not demand circumcision of the Gentiles who turned to God (Acts 15:19). It exempted Gentile Christians from the requirements of the Mosaic law.

Next, Paul took Titus to Jerusalem as a test case at the time of the Jerusalem Council. The council exempted Titus from the requirement of circumcision because he was a Gentile Christian. Titus's presence at the council proved the point: Gentiles obtain salvation without becoming Jews.

Last, Paul tells the Galatians (including the believers in Lystra) that they are free in Christ and are not in bondage to the law of circumcision. God accepts a believer not on the basis of circumcision but because of faith expressed through love (Gal. 5:6, 13–14), Paul teaches the Galatians the same message: the Gentiles are free from the yoke of the law (15:10; Gal. 5:1).

In the case of Timothy, "being a good Christian did not mean being a bad Jew." Paul himself wanted to be all things to all people, so that he might win both Jew and Gentile for Christ (1 Cor. 9:19–23). He expected that Timothy, a fellow missionary, would do the same. Hence, Paul circumcised him to remove any hindrance to furthering the cause of Christ.³ What was not necessary on the ground of salvation was indispensable as a qualification for service.⁴

² Baker New Testament Commentary, Acts 16:3

³ Kistemaker, S. J., & Hendriksen, W. (1953-2001). *Vol. 17: New Testament commentary : Exposition of the Acts of the Apostles.*

⁴ Furneaux, Acts 16:3.

TOPIC: CIRCUMCISION

Acts 16:4

And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees to keep, that were ordained by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem.

The cities were at least the cities of Syria and Cilicia and the cities Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium. No mention is made of Antioch of Pisidia, and since it was well out of their way, they probably did not revisit that city. From Iconium they would proceed by the direct road to Phrygia.

The decrees that they delivered were the instructions of the apostles and elders in Jerusalem regarding abstaining from offerings to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from fornication.

Silas was with Paul to back up the declarations of these spiritual instructions.

Acts 16:5

And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

The firm, consistent teaching of ground truths of salvation and Christian living, strengthened the believers in their faith. The result of this outreach among Gentiles was extraordinary growth; the Gentile church was rapidly developing. The blessing of God was on the work of Paul, Silas, and Timothy, in the form of a continuous revival.

TOPIC: TEACHING IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Acts 16:6

Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia,

Phrygia

There were Phrygian Jews in Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost. Not much is known about the racial makeup of these people. They were a

mixture of Greek and some Asiatic people. The Phrygians, Pamphylans, and Lycians were mercenary soldiers during much of their history, and furnished soldiers for hire to most of the major powers. Their language used the Greek alphabet, but the language was Asiatic, transliterated into Greek. Nevertheless, it was spoken by one or more of the disciples on the day of Pentecost.

MAP: ASIA (TURKEY)

Galatia

Ancient Galatia was an area in the highlands of central Anatolia in modern Turkey. Galatia was named for the immigrant Gauls from Thrace, who settled here and became its ruling caste in the 3rd century BC, following the Gallic invasion of the Balkans in 279 BC. It has been called the "Gallia" of the East, Roman writers calling its inhabitants "Galli" ("Gauls").

Galatia was bounded on the north by Bithynia and Paphlagonia, on the east by Pontus and Cappadocia, on the south by Cilicia and Lycaonia, and on the west by Phrygia. Its capital was Ancyra (i.e. Ankara, today the capital of modern Turkey).

In the Bible, "Asia" refers to the Roman province of Asia. All of Turkey, including islands of the eastern Aegean. A principle group of settlers here were the Gauls. When the Gauls were in Europe, they emigrated to many other places. Some went to the British Isles, and some stayed in France.

The Gauls tried to fight their way into Italy, but were defeated by Julius Caesar. They tried to enter Greece by way of Dalmatia, but they were defeated at the Battle of Delphi. Finally, a large number of Gauls crossed the Hellespont and settled in northern Turkey.

These people were known as the Galatians. They spoke Gaelic languages.

TOPIC: GALATIA

and were forbidden in the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia.

Since they were already in Asia and ministering (Phrygia, Pisidia, Lycaonia, Pamphylia), this direction from God must have been meant to steer Paul and his companions clear of what is called Proconsular Asia, which included only Ionia, Aeolia, Caria, Lydia, and the Aegean islands.

In some manner, the Holy Spirit made it clear to Paul that his ministry must extend the gospel into Greece, rather than into any other regions of Asia Minor.

There is no indication of why this direction was given. It may be that God chose to send the missionaries to a place where the gospel would be better received, in case the people in southwest Asia were not yet prepared to receive it.

Acts 16:7,8

After they came to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

And passing by Mysia they came down to Troas.

Mysia

MAP: ASIA (TURKEY)

Mysia was a region in the northwest of ancient Asia Minor or Anatolia (part of modern Turkey). It was located on the south coast of the Sea of Marmara. It was bounded by Bithynia on the east, Phrygia on the southeast, Lydia on the south, Aeolis on the southwest, Troas on the west and by the Propontis on the north. In ancient times it was inhabited by the Mysians, Phrygians, Aeolian Greeks, and other groups.

Apparently Paul did not stop in Mysia to preach or establish churches, but continued on to Troas.

Bithynia

Paul, Silas, and Timothy were directed away from Bithynia on this missionary trip. But since Peter mentions Bithynia in his greeting in 1 Peter 1:1, it is likely that Peter was the apostle to the Bithynians.

TOPIC: BITHYNIA

Troas

Apparently, Paul did not stay in Troas long either. This city was the port of Alexandrian Troas, so it is from here that Paul, Silas, and Timothy took ship for Macedonia.

TOPIC: TROAS

Acts 16:9

And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

And a vision appeared to Paul in the night

The phrase “in the night” might mean that the vision came to Paul in a dream. He could have been awake, though, and in a trance, as Peter was when he saw the vision in Acts 10. Paul’s visions always came at a real crisis in his life. In this vision at Troas, the Lord neither speaks to him directly nor sends an angel; instead, Paul sees a man who made a request to him.

There stood a man of Macedonia, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.

This does not mean that a real man approached Paul, but that it was a revelation, a representation to the mind.

From Lange, *Das Apostolische Zeitalter*, p 202. “The Macedonian spirit once, as a proud conqueror [Alexander], crossed the Hellespont and filled Asia with his glory; now he stands as a suppliant before a man who has no other weapon than the sword of the Spirit”.

To “come over” into Macedonia means that Paul would have to cross the Aegean Sea and strike land in Europe.

Paul knew that the man was Macedonian, probably by the appearance of his clothing and by his language. The “help” that he is asking for is the preaching of the gospel. As in most of Paul’s other missionary efforts, there was considerable danger and many trials involved in this, but Paul and Silas responded eagerly, giving themselves to the work.

TOPIC: MACEDONIA

Acts 16:10

And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel unto them.

Note the “we” in this verse. This is evidence that Luke had by this time joined Paul and the other missionaries; Luke uses the first person plural from here on in Acts, to describe their joint experiences.

Luke never mentions his own name in Acts, but it is unnecessary; he was writing this to Theophilus (Acts 1:1), who would have known the references Luke made.

assuredly gathering

They were fully convinced of the genuineness of this message, that it came from the Lord and that they were to preach in Macedonia.

Acts 16:11

Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;

Troas was a port city; the missionaries would have found a ship sailing to Neapolis.

straight course to Samothracia

Samothracia was an island in the Aegean Sea, about 20 miles in circumference, not far from Thrace (Europe north of the Hellespont). It was about halfway between Troas and Neapolis, the seaport of Philippi. It was mainly populated by people from Samos and Thrace, and the island

was called "Samos of Thrace", to distinguish it from the island of Samos (Acts 20:15), which was also in the Aegean Sea but a little southwest of Ephesus.

The island had no natural harbor and was too mountainous for much cultivation. Among other things, this island was an asylum for fugitives and criminals.

The island's most famous site is the Sanctuary of the Great Gods; the most famous artifact of which is the 2.5-metre marble statue of Nike, now known as the Winged Victory of Samothrace, dating from about 190 BC. It was discovered in pieces on the island in 1863 by the French archaeologist Charles Champoiseau, and is now headless, in the Louvre in Paris.

and the next day to Neapolis

Shortly after the Romans incorporated Macedonia as a province, they built the Via Egnatia, a paved road over 500 miles long, running from the Adriatic coast to the Aegean, it was traveled by the apostle Paul as he moved through the Macedonian cities of Neapolis, Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, and Thessalonica.

Acts 16:12

And from there to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we stayed in that city certain days.

The name of this city originally had been Datum, but Philip of Macedon renamed it after himself. It was famous as the scene of the great victory of Antony and Octavian (Augustus) over Brutus and Cassius, a battle that decided the fate of the Roman Empire 40 years before the birth of Christ. All this was not mentioned by Luke, however, as his history was concerned with the greater battle now beginning between the Christian faith and old-world idolatry.⁵

⁵ Furneaux, Acts 16:12

a colony

That is, Philippi was a military settlement of veterans of the Roman legions, who had retired there and had farms assigned to them as a reward for their lifetime of military service. Here Paul and the others found themselves in the Roman world. Latin was the official language; the constitution was that of Rome. He was now engaged in the conquest of the Roman Empire in the name of Christ.

TOPIC: PHILIPPI

Circumcision

One of the first acts of circumcision in the human race involved Abraham.

Genesis 17:6-11. And I will make thee exceedingly fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.

And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.

And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, thou, and thy seed after thee in their generations.

This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you and thy seed after thee; Every man child among you shall be circumcised.

And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin; and it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and you.

This initial act of circumcision was the seal of Abraham's faith in God's promise of possessing the land. It was the indication that Abraham believed God's word. Abraham separated himself unto the Lord and to the Lord's promise.

Circumcision is, therefore, a sign of regeneration for the Jews. It was to the born again Jew what water baptism is to the born-again believer in the Church Age, a sign.

Circumcision is also used by God as a teaching mechanism, a visual aid to provide a picture of regeneration by faith. The circumcision of male children on the 8th day was an act of dedication by the parents. By this means they declared that they would teach salvation by faith to their children. They anticipated that their children would become believers.

Col. 2:11-13. In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ:

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses.

Circumcision is also a picture of positional truth, especially the identification with Jesus Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.

There can be no victory in the Christian way of life without victory over the old life, over the sin nature. This is the application of positional truth to experience.

The Lord also used circumcision as a picture of Israel's restoration to fellowship and service.

READ Joshua 5:1-9

This restoration, by faith, was necessary for the victory the Israelites were about to experience (Jericho) and for the time of rest they were about to enter. There can be no victory over Canaan until there is victory over carnality (Egypt). Circumcision denotes separation from the world and the flesh, self-judgment, yieldedness, dedication, commitment.

Romans 4:9-13. Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness.

How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision.

And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also.

And the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised.

For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Circumcision is a sign of imputed righteousness; it is the sign that one has believed and is cleansed by the blood of Christ and has God's Righteousness credited to his account. Gen. 15:6; 2 Cor. 5:21.

The true significance of circumcision was not in the physical act being perpetuated but in the reasons the ritual was begun in the first place. Circumcision was a sign that something had already taken place, namely, Abraham's salvation.

Circumcision was also a seal. A seal indicates the validity of the thing to which it is attached. It has no significance apart from that which it covers. Circumcision was a seal attached to something valuable, salvation.

During the Church Age, water baptism is the outward sign of an inward faith. Circumcision was the outward sign for the Jews before the Church Age.

Religious Jews tried to make the seal valuable in itself. They attached spiritual value to the act of

circumcision, ignoring the substance. They contended that circumcision was needed for salvation, which led to the formation of a ritualistic religion.

Abraham was saved by faith, long before he was circumcised. He is, therefore, the "father of all who believe" because he is the pattern of those who were saved in status quo uncircumcision, whether Jew or Gentile.

Galatia

From [Galatia](#), an article in Wikipedia.

Ancient Galatia was an area in the highlands of central Anatolia in modern Turkey. Galatia was named for the immigrant Gauls from Thrace, who settled here and became its ruling caste in the 3rd century BC, following the Gallic invasion of the Balkans in 279 BC. It has been called the "Gallia" of the East, Roman writers calling its inhabitants "Galli" ("Gauls").⁶

Galatia was bounded on the north by Bithynia and Paphlagonia, on the east by Pontus and Cappadocia, on the south by Cilicia and Lycaonia, and on the west by Phrygia. Its capital was Ancyra (i.e. Ankara, today the capital of modern Turkey).

From W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*.

We now come to a political division of Asia Minor, which demands a more careful attention. Its sacred interest is greater than that of all the others, and its history is more peculiar. The Christians of Galatia were they who received the Apostle "as if he had been an angel" who, "if it had been possible, would have plucked out their eyes and given them to him" and then were "so soon removed" by new teachers "from him that called them, to another Gospel" who began to "run well," and then were hindered, who were "bewitched" by that zeal which compassed sea and land to make one proselyte, and who were as ready, in the fervor of their party spirit, to "bite and devour one another," as

⁶ from Wikipedia article *Galatia*.

they were willing to change their teachers and their gospels." (Gal. 4:15; 1:6; 5:7; 3:1; 1:7; 5:15)

It is no mere fancy which discovers, in these expressions of St. Paul's Epistle, indications of the character of that remarkable race of mankind, which all writers, from Caesar to Thierry, have described as susceptible of quick impressions and sudden changes, with a fickleness equal to their courage and enthusiasm, and a constant liability to that disunion which is the fruit of excessive vanity, that race, which has not only produced one of the greatest nations of modern times, but which, long before the Christian era, wandering forth from their early European seats, burnt Rome and pillaged Delphi, founded an empire in northern Italy more than co extensive with Austrian Lombardy, and another in Asia Minor, equal in importance to one of the largest domains of the pashas.

For the "Galatia" of the New Testament was really the "Gaul" of the East. The "Epistle to the Galatians" would more literally and more correctly be called the "Epistle to the Gauls." When Livy, in his account of the Roman campaigns in Galatia, speaks of its inhabitants, he always calls them "Gauls."⁷ When the Greek historians speak of the inhabitants of ancient France, the word they use is "Galatians." The two terms are merely the Greek and Latin forms of the same appellation.

That emigration of the Gauls, which ended in the settlement in Asia Minor, is less famous than those which led to the disasters in Italy and Greece; but it is, in fact, identical with the latter of these two emigrations, and its results were more permanent. The warriors who roamed over the Cevennes, or by the banks of the Garonne, reappear on the Halys and at the base of Mount Dindymus. They exchange the superstitions of Druidism for the ceremonies of the worship of Cybele. The very name of the

⁷ The country of the Galatians was sometimes called Gallogrecia.

chief Galatian tribe is one with which we are familiar in the earliest history of France ; and Jerome says that, in his own day, the language spoken at Ancyra was almost identical with that of Treves.

The Galatians were a stream from that torrent of barbarians which poured into Greece in the third century before our era, and which recoiled in confusion from the cliffs of Delphi. Some tribes had previously separated from the main army, and penetrated into Thrace. There they were joined by certain of the fugitives, and together they appeared on the coasts, which are separated by a narrow arm of the sea from the rich plains and valleys of Bithynia. The wars with which that kingdom was harassed, made their presence acceptable. Nicomedes was the Vortigern of Asia Minor: and the two Gaulish chieftains, Leonor and Lutar, may be fitly compared to the two legendary heroes of the Anglo Saxon invasion. Some difficulties occurred in the passage of the Bosphorus, which curiously contrast with the easy voyages of our pirate ancestors.

But once established in Asia Minor, the Gauls lost no time in spreading over the whole peninsula with their arms and devastation. In their first crossing over we have compared them to the Saxons. In their first occupation they may be more fitly compared to the Danes. For they were a movable army rather than a nation, encamping, marching, and plundering at will. They stationed themselves on the site of ancient Troy, and drove their chariots in the plain of the Cayster. They divided nearly the whole peninsula among their three tribes. They levied tribute on cities, and even on kings. The wars of the East found them various occupation. They hired themselves out as mercenary soldiers. They were the royal guards of the kings of Syria, and the mamelukes of the Ptolemies in Egypt.⁸

⁸ Even in the time of Julius Caesar, we find four hundred Gauls (Galatians), who had previously been

The surrounding monarchs gradually curtailed their power, and repressed them within narrower limits. First Antiochus Soter drove the Tectosages, and then Eumenes drove the Trocmi and Tolistobii, into the central district which afterwards became Galatia. Their territory was definitely marked out and surrounded by the other states of Asia Minor, and they retained a geographical position similar to that of Hungary in the midst of its German and Slavonic neighbors. By degrees they coalesced into a number of small confederate states, and ultimately into one united kingdom. Successive circumstances brought them into contact with the Romans in various ways ; first, by a religious embassy sent from Rome to obtain peaceful possession of the sacred image of Cybele ; secondly, by the campaign of Manlius, who reduced their power and left them a nominal independence ; and then through the period of hazardous alliance with the rival combatants in the Civil Wars. The first Deiotarus was made king by Pompey, fled before Caesar at the battle of Pharsalia, and was defended before the conqueror by Cicero, in a speech which still remains to us. The second Deiotarus, like his father, was Cicero's friend, and took charge of his son and nephew during the Cilician campaign. Amyntas, who succeeded him, owed his power to Antony, but prudently went over to Augustus in the battle of Actium. At the death of Amyntas, Augustus made some modifications in the extent of Galatia, and placed it under a governor. It was now a province, reaching from the borders of Asia and Bithynia to the neighborhood of Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, "cities of Lycaonia"

Henceforward, like the Western Gaul, this territory was a part of the Roman Empire, though retaining the traces of its history in the character and language of its principal inhabitants. There was this difference, however, between the Eastern and the Western Gaul, that the latter was more rapidly and more

part of Cleopatra's bodyguard, given for the same purpose to Herod. Josephus, *War*, xx.3.

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completely assimilated to Italy. It passed from its barbarian to its Roman state, without being subjected to any intermediate civilization. The Gauls of the East, on the other hand, had long been familiar with the Greek language and the Greek culture. St. Paul's Epistle was written in Greek. The cotemporary inscriptions of the province are usually in the same language. The Galatians themselves are frequently called Gallo Grecians ; and many of the inhabitants of the province must have been of pure Grecian origin. Another section of the population, the early Phrygians, were probably numerous, but in a lower and more degraded position. The presence of great numbers of Jews in the province, implies that it was, in some respects, favorable for traffic; and it is evident that the district must have been constantly intersected by the course of caravans from Armenia, the Hellespont, and the South. The Roman Itineraries inform us of the lines of communication between the great towns near the Halys and the other parts of Asia Minor. These circumstances are closely connected with the spread of the Gospel, and we shall return to them again when we describe St. Paul's first reception in Galatia.

CHURCHES OF GALATIA

The remarks which have been made on Phrygia, must be repeated, with some modification, concerning Galatia. It is true that Galatia was a province : but we can plainly see that the term is used here in its popular sense, not as denoting the whole territory which was governed by the Galatian proprietor, but rather the primitive region of the tetrarchs and kings, without including those districts of Phrygia or Lycaonia, which were now politically united with it.

There is absolutely no city in true Galatia which is mentioned by the Sacred Writers in connection with the first spread of Christianity. From the peculiar form of expression with which the Christians of this part of Asia Minor are addressed by St. Paul in the Epistle which he wrote to them, and alluded to in another of

his Epistles (1 Cor. 16:1), we infer that the churches of Galatia, were not confined to any one city, but distributed through various parts of the country.

If we were to mention two cities, which, both from their intrinsic importance, and from their connection with the leading roads, are likely to have been visited and revisited by the Apostle, we should be inclined to select Pessinua and Ancyra. The first of these cities retained some importance as the former capital of one of the Galatian tribes, and its trade was considerable under the early Emperors. Moreover, it had an ancient and widespread renown, as the seat of the primitive worship of Cybele, the Great Mother. Though her oldest and most sacred image (which, like that of Diana at Ephesus, had 'fallen down from heaven') had been removed to Rome, her worship continued to thrive in Galatia, under the superintendence of her effeminate and fanatical priests; and Pessinus was the object of one of Julian's pilgrimages, when Heathenism was on the decline. Ancyra was a place of still greater moment : for it was the capital of the province.

The time of its highest eminence was not under the Gaulish but the Roman government. Augustus built there a magnificent temple of marble, and inscribed there a history of his deeds, almost in the style of an Asiatic sovereign." This city was the meeting place of all the great roads in the north of the peninsula." And, when we add that Jews had been established there from the time of Augustus," and probably earlier, we can hardly avoid the conclusion that the Temple and Inscription at Angora, which successive travelers have described and copied during the last three hundred years, were once seen by the Apostle of the Gentiles.

However this may have been, we have some information from his own pen, concerning his first journey through" the region of Galatia." We know that he was delayed there by sickness, and we know in what spirit the Galatians received him.

St. Paul affectionately reminds the Galatians (Gal. 4:13) "that it was 'bodily sickness which caused him to preach the Glad Tidings to them at the first.' The allusion is to his first visit : and the obvious inference is, that he was passing through Galatia to some other district (possibly Pontus, where we know that many Jews were established), when the state of his bodily health arrested his progress.

Thus he became, as it were, the Evangelist of Galatia against his will. But his zeal to discharge the duty that was laid on him did not allow him to be silent. He was instant "in season and out of season." "Woe" was on him if he did not preach the Gospel. The same Providence detained him among the Gauls, which would not allow him to enter Asia or Bithynia (Acts 16:6,7): and in the midst of his weakness he made the Glad Tidings known to all who would listen to him.

We cannot say what this sickness was, or even with certainty identify it with that "thorn in the flesh" (2 Cor. 12:7 10) to which he feelingly alludes in his Epistles as a discipline which God had laid on him. But the remembrance of what he suffered in Galatia seems so much to color all the phrases in this part of the Epistle that a deep personal interest is connected with the circumstance. Sickness in a foreign country has a peculiarly depressing effect on a sensitive mind. And though doubtless Timothy watched over the Apostle's weakness with the most affectionate solicitude, yet those who have experienced what fever is in a land of strangers will know how to sympathize, even with St. Paul, in this human trial.

The climate and the prevailing maladies of Asia Minor may have been modified with the lapse of centuries: and we are without the guidance of St. Luke's medical language," which sometimes throws a light on diseases alluded to in Scripture: but two Christian sufferers, in widely different ages of the Church, occur to the memory as we look on the map of Galatia. We could hardly mention any two men more thoroughly imbued with the spirit of St. Paul, than John Chrysostom and Henry Martyn, And

when we read how these two saints suffered in their last hours from fatigue, pain, rudeness, and cruelty, among the mountains of Asia Minor which surround the place where they rest,⁹ we can well enter into the meaning of St. Paul's expressions of gratitude to those who received him kindly in the hour of his weakness.

The Apostle's reception among the frank and warmhearted Gauls was peculiarly kind and disinterested. No Church is reminded by the Apostle so tenderly of the time of their first meeting. The recollection is used by him to strengthen his reproaches of their mutability, and to enforce the pleading with which he urges them to return to the true Gospel. That Gospel had been received in the first place with the same affection which they extended to the Apostle himself. And the subject, the manner, and the results of his preaching are not obscurely indicated in the Epistle itself. The great topic there, as at Corinth and everywhere, was 'the cross of Christ' Christ crucified" set forth among them.¹⁰ The Divine evidence of the Spirit followed the word, spoken by the mouth of the Apostle, and received by 'the hearing of the ear.' Many were converted, both Greeks and Jews, men and women, free men and slaves.

The worship of false divinities, whether connected with the old superstition at Pessinus, or the Roman idolatry at Ancyra, was forsaken for that of the true and living God. And before St. Paul left the region of Galatia on his onward progress, various Christian communities were added to those of Cilicia, Lycaonia, and Phrygia.

Iconium

Iconium was a city in the southwest part of central Asia Minor located about 95 miles (153 kilometers) from the Mediterranean coast. It is

⁹ It is remarkable that Chrysostom and Martyn are buried in the same place. They both died on a journey at Tocat or Comana in Pontus.

¹⁰ Compare Gal. 3:1 with 1 Cor. 1:13,17 and 2:2

known today as Konya, a Turkish city, and capital of the province bearing the same name.

Iconium was an agricultural center famous for its wheat fields and orchards of apricots and plums. Its ideal location and climate helped establish its place as a major link in the trade routes between Syria, Ephesus, and Rome.

Little is known about the origin of the city. Its beginnings may be traced to a group of immigrant tribes from northern Greece—the Phrygians. Xenophon, a Greek historian (c. 428–354 BC), mentions it as a Phrygian city visited by Cyrus. Since the Phrygian language was spoken in Iconium, it is likely that the inhabitants considered themselves of this extraction. Although the name Iconium was originally Phrygian, a myth was later created to infuse it with Greek meaning. According to this legend, a great flood destroys mankind. Life is restored when Prometheus and Athena breathe life into human images made from mud left by subsiding waters. The Greek word for “image” is *eikon*, from which comes the name Iconium, according to the legend.

In the third century BC, Iconium was governed by the Seleucid kings of Syria. As proponents of Greek culture, the Seleucids soon turned Iconium into a Hellenistic city. The Greek language was spoken and the people were ruled by two magistrates appointed annually. Despite later domination by the Gauls and Pontic kings (c. 165–63 BC), Iconium retained its Hellenistic character until NT times. In 36 BC Mark Antony gave the city to Antymas. Upon his death in 25 BC, Iconium joined the neighboring cities of Lystra, Derbe, and Pisidian Antioch as a part of the province of Galatia and so became incorporated into the Roman Empire.

The apostle Paul visited Iconium on his first missionary journey. Having been forced to leave Pisidian Antioch (Acts 13:51), Paul came to the synagogue in Iconium. His preaching initially won the approval of both the Jews and Greeks, but unbelieving Jews soon incited a riot against him (14:1–7). Paul fled to Lystra, but he was followed by the Iconian Jews, who stoned him

and left him for dead (v 19; cf. 2 Tm 3:11). Cared for by friends, Paul was able to join Barnabas in Derbe, where they made many disciples then later returned to Iconium to strengthen the Christians there (Acts 14:20–23). During the second missionary journey, Timothy was recommended to Paul and Silas by the Christians at Iconium (16:1–2).¹¹

Macedonia

From [Macedonia](#), an article in Wikipedia.

Macedonia or Macedon (from Greek: Μακεδονία, Makedonía) was an ancient kingdom, centered in the northeastern part of the Greek peninsula,[1] bordered by Epirus to the west, Paeonia to the north, the region of Thrace to the east and Thessaly to the south. The rise of Macedon, from a small kingdom at the periphery of Classical Greek affairs, to one which came to dominate the entire Hellenic world, occurred under the reign of Philip II. For a brief period, after the conquests of Alexander the Great, it became the most powerful state in the world, controlling a territory that included the former Persian empire, stretching as far as the Indus River; at that time it inaugurated the Hellenistic period of Ancient Greek civilization.

The Roman province of Macedonia (Latin: Provincia Macedoniae, Greek: Επαρχία Μακεδονίας) was officially established in 146 BC, after the Roman general Quintus Caecilius Metellus defeated Andriscus of Macedon, the last Ancient King of Macedon in 148 BC, and after the four client republics ("tetrarchy") established by Rome in the region were dissolved. The province incorporated ancient Macedon, Epirus, Thessaly, and parts of Illyria, Paeonia and Thrace.

The following is from “The Life and Epistles of St. Paul,” by W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson

¹¹ Elwell, W. A., & Comfort, P. W. (2001). *Tyndale Bible dictionary*. Tyndale reference library (623–624). Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers.

Macedonia, in its popular sense, may be described as a region bounded by a great semicircle of mountains, beyond which the streams flow westward to the Adriatic, or northward and eastward to the Danube and the Euxine. This mountain barrier sends down branches to the sea on the eastern or Thracian frontier, over against Thasos and Samothrace; and on the south shuts out the plain of Thessaly, and rises near the shore to the high summits of Pelion, Ossa, and the snowy Olympus. The space thus enclosed is intersected by two great rivers. One of these is Homer's "wide flowing Axios," which directs its course past Pella, the ancient metropolis of the Macedonian kings, and the birthplace of Alexander, to the low levels in the neighborhood of Thessalonica, where other rivers flow near it into the Thermaic gulf.

The other is the Strymon, which brings the produce of the great inland level of Serres by Lake Cercinus to the sea at Amphipolis, and beyond which was Philippi, the military outpost that commemorated the successful conquests of Alexander's father. Between the mouths of these two rivers a remarkable tract of country, which is insular rather than continental, projects into the Archipelago, and divides itself into three points, on the furthest of which Mount Athos rises nearly into the region of perpetual snow. Part of St. Paul's path between Philippi and Berea lay across the neck of this peninsula. The whole of his route was over historical ground. At Philippi he was close to the confines of Thracian barbarism, and on the spot where the last battle was fought in defense of the Republic. At Berea he came near the mountains, beyond which is the region of Classical Greece, and close to the spot where the battle was fought which reduced Macedonia to a province"

If we wish to view Macedonia as a province, some modifications must be introduced into the preceding description. It applies, indeed, with sufficient exactness to the country on its first conquest by the Romans. The rivers already alluded to, define the four districts into which it was divided. Macedonia Prima was the region

east of the Strymon, of which Amphipolis was the capital; Macedonia Secunda lay between the Strymon and the Axios, and Thessalonica was its metropolis; and the other two regions were situated to the south towards Thessaly, and on the mountains to the west. This was the division adopted by Paulus Aemilius after the battle of Pydna. But the arrangement was only temporary.

The whole of Macedonia, along with some adjacent territories, was made one province, and centralized under the jurisdiction of a proconsul who resided at Thessalonica. This province included Thessaly, and extended over the mountain chain which had been the western boundary of ancient Macedonia, so as to embrace a seaboard of considerable length on the shore of the Adriatic. The political limits, in this part of the Empire, are far more easily discriminated than those with which we have been lately occupied (Chapter 8). Three provinces divided the whole surface which extends from the basin of the Danube to Cape Matapan. All of them are familiar to us in the writings of St. Paul.

The extent of Macedonia has just been defined. Its relations with the other provinces were as follows. On the north west it was contiguous to Illyricum, which was spread down the shore of the Adriatic nearly to the same point to which the Austrian territory now extends, fringing the Mohammedan empire with a Christian border. A hundred miles to the southward, at the Acroceraunian promontory, it touched Achaia, the boundary of which province ran thence in an irregular line to the bay of Thermopylae and the north of Euboea, including Epirus, and excluding Thessaly. Achaia and Macedonia were traversed many times by the Apostle; and he could say, when he was hoping to travel to Rome, that he had preached the Gospel "round about unto Illyricum." (Rom. 15:19)

When we allude to Rome, and think of the relation of the City to the provinces, we are inevitably reminded of the military roads; and here, across the breadth of Macedonia, was one of the greatest roads of the Empire. It is evident

that, after Constantinople was founded, a line of communication between the Eastern and Western capitals was of the utmost moment; but the Via Egnatia was constructed long before that period. Strabo, in the reign of Augustus, informs us that it was regularly made and marked out by milestones, from Dyrrhachium on the Adriatic, to Cypselus on the Hebrus in Thrace; and, even before the close of the republic, we find Cicero speaking, in one of his orations, of `that military way of ours, which connects us with the Hellespont.”

Certain districts on the European side of the Hellespont had been part of the legacy of King Attalus, and the simultaneous possession of Macedonia, Asia, and Bithynia, with the prospect of further conquests in the East, made this line of communication absolutely necessary. When St. Paul was on the Roman road at Troas or Philippi, he was on a road which led to the gates of Rome. It was the same pavement which he afterwards trod at Appii Forum and the Three Taverns (Acts 28:15). The nearest parallel which the world has seen of the imperial roads is the present European railway system.

The Hellespont and the Bosphorus, in the reign of Claudius, were what the Straits of Dover and Holyhead are now; and even the passage from Brundisium in Italy, to Dyrrhachium and Apollonia in Macedonia, was only a tempestuous ferry, only one of those difficulties of nature which the Romans would have overcome if they could, and which the boldest of the Romans dared to defy. From Dyrrhachium and Apollonia, the Via Egnatia, strictly so called, extended a distance of five hundred miles, to the Hebrus, in Thrace. Thessalonica was about half way between these remote points, and Philippi was the last important town in the province of Macedonia.

Timothy

From [Timothy](#), an article in Wikipedia.

Timothy is mentioned in the Bible at the time of Paul's second visit to Lystra in Anatolia, where

Timothy is mentioned as a "disciple". Paul, impressed by his "own son in the faith," arranged that he should become his companion. Timothy was the son of a Jewess, but had not been circumcised, and Paul now ensured that this was done, according to the text, to ensure Timothy's acceptability to the Jews. According to McGarvey Paul performed the operation "with his own hand", but others claim this is unlikely and nowhere attested[citation needed]. He was ordained and went with Paul on his journeys through Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, Troas, Philippi, Veria, and Corinth. His mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois, are noted as eminent for their piety and faith, which indicates that they may have also been Christians. Timothy is praised by Paul for his knowledge of the Scriptures (in the 1st century mostly the Septuagint, see Development of the New Testament canon (Clement of Rome), and is said to have been acquainted with the Scriptures since childhood. Little is known about Timothy's father; only that he was Greek.

From W. J. Conybeare and J. S. Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*.

The seeds of Gospel truth had been sown in the heart of Timothy before he met Paul. The instruction received in childhood, the sight of St. Paul's sufferings, the hearing of his words, the example of the `unfeigned faith, which first dwelt in his grandmother Lois and his mother Eunice," (2 Tim. 1:5) and whatever other influences the Holy Spirit had used for his soul's good, had resulted in the full conviction that Jesus was the Messiah. And if we may draw an obvious inference from the various passages of Scripture, which describe the subsequent relation of Paul and Timothy, we may assert that natural qualities of an engaging character were combined with the Christian faith of this young disciple.

The Apostle's heart seems to have been drawn towards him with peculiar tenderness. He singled him out from the other disciples. `Him would Paul have to go forth with him." (Acts 16:3) This feeling is in harmony with all that we read, in the Acts and the Epistles, of St. Paul's

affectionate and confiding disposition. He had no relative ties which were of service in his apostolic work; his companions were few and changing; and though Silas may well be supposed to have supplied the place of Barnabas, it was no weakness to yearn for the society of one who might become, what Mark had once appeared to be, a son in the Gospels. Yet how could he consistently take an untried youth on so difficult an enterprise? How could he receive Timothy into "the glorious company of Apostles," when he had rejected Mark? Such questions might be raised, if we were not distinctly told that the highest testimony was given to Timothy's Christian character, not only at Lystra, but at Iconium also. (Acts 16:2) We infer from this, that diligent inquiry was made concerning his fitness for the work to which he was willing to devote himself. To omit, at present, all notice of the prophetic intimations which sanctioned the appointment of Timothy, we have the best proof that he united in himself those outward and inward qualifications which a careful prudence would require.

One other point must be alluded to, which was of the utmost moment at that particular crisis of the Church. The meeting of the Council at Jerusalem had lately taken place. And, though it had been decided that the Gentiles were not to be forced into Judaism on embracing Christianity, and though St. Paul carried with him "the Decree, to be delivered" to all the churches," yet still he was in a delicate and difficult position. The Jewish Christians had naturally a great jealousy on the subject of their ancient divine Law; and in dealing with the two parties the Apostle had need of the utmost caution and discretion. We see, then, that in choosing a fellow worker, for his future labors, there was a peculiar fitness in selecting one whose mother was a Jewess, while his father was a Greek.

We may be permitted here to take a short retrospect of the childhood and education of St. Paul's new associate. The hand of the Apostle himself has drawn for us the picture of his early years. (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15) That picture represents

to us a mother and a grandmother, full of tenderness and faith, piously instructing the young Timothy in the ancient Scriptures, making his memory familiar with that "cloud of witnesses" which encompassed all the history of the chosen people, and training his hopes to expect the Messiah of Israel.

It is not allowed to us to trace the previous history of these godly women of the dispersion. It is highly probable that they may have been connected with those Babylonian Jews whom Antiochus settled in Phrygia three centuries before: or they may have been conducted into Lycaonia by some of those mercantile and other changes which affected the movements of so many families at the epoch we are writing of; such, for instance, as those which brought the household of the Corinthian Chloe into relations with Ephesus, and caused the proselyte Lydia to remove from Thyatira to Philippi"

There is one difficulty which, at first sight, seems considerable; viz. the fact that a religious Jewess, like Eunice, should have been married to a Greek. Such a marriage was scarcely in harmony with the stricter spirit of early Judaism, and in Palestine itself it could hardly have taken place. But among the Jews of the dispersion, and especially in remote districts, where but few of the scattered people were established, the case was rather different. Mixed marriages, under such circumstances, were doubtless very frequent. We are at liberty to suppose that in this case the husband was a proselyte. We hear of no objections raised to the circumcision of Timothy, and we may reasonably conclude that the father was himself inclined to Judaism: if, indeed, he were not already deceased, and Eunice a widow.

This very circumstance, however, of his mixed origin gave to Timothy an intimate connection with both the Jewish and Gentile worlds. Though far removed from the larger colonies of Israelite families, he was brought up in a thoroughly Jewish atmosphere: his heart was at Jerusalem while his footsteps were in the level fields near Lystra, or on the volcanic crags of the Black Mount: and his mind was stored with

the Hebrew or Greek words of inspired men of old in the midst of the rude idolaters, whose language was "the speech of Lycaonia." And yet he could hardly be called a Jewish boy, for he had not been admitted within the pale of God's ancient covenant by the rite of circumcision. He was in the same position, with respect to the Jewish Church, as those, with respect to the Christian Church, who, in various ages, and for various reasons, have deferred their baptism to the period of mature life. And "the Jews which were in those quarters," (Acts 16:3) however much they may have respected him, yet, knowing "that his father was a Greek," and that he himself was uncircumcised, must have considered him all but an "alien from the commonwealth of Israel"

Now, for St. Paul to travel among the synagogues with a companion in this condition, and to attempt to convince the Jews that Jesus was the Messiah, when his associate and assistant in the work was an uncircumcised Heathen, would evidently have been to encumber his progress and embarrass his work. We see in the first aspect of the case a complete explanation of what to many has seemed inconsistent, and what some have ventured to pronounce as culpable, in the conduct of St. Paul. "He took and circumcised Timothy." How could he do otherwise, if he acted with his usual "farsighted caution and deliberation? Had Timothy not been circumcised, a storm would have gathered round the Apostle in his further progress.

The Jews, who were ever ready to persecute him from city to city, would have denounced him still more violently in every synagogue, when they saw in his personal preferences, and in the co operation he most valued, a visible revolt against the law of his forefathers. To imagine that they could have overlooked the absence of circumcision in Timothy's case, as a matter of no essential importance, is to suppose they had already become enlightened Christians. Even in the bosom of the Church we have seen the difficulties which had recently been raised by scrupulousness and bigotry on

this very subject. And the difficulties would have been increased tenfold in the untrodden field before St. Paul by proclaiming everywhere on his very arrival that circumcision was abolished. His fixed line of procedure was to act on the cities through the synagogues, and to preach the Gospel first to the Jew and then to the Gentile."

He had no intention of abandoning this method, and we know that he continued it for many years." But such a course would have been impossible had not Timothy been circumcised. He must necessarily have been repelled by that people who endeavored once (as we shall see hereafter) to murder St. Paul, because they imagined he had taken a Greek into the Temple (Acts 21:29, with 22:22). The very intercourse of social life would have been hindered, and made almost impossible, by the presence of a half heathen companion: for, however far the stricter practice may have been relaxed among the Hellenizing Jews of the dispersion, the general principle of exclusiveness everywhere remained, and it was still "an abomination" for the circumcised to eat with the uncircumcised.

It may be thought, however, that St. Paul's conduct in circumcising Timothy was inconsistent with the principle and practice he maintained at Jerusalem when he refused to circumcise Titus (Gal. 2:3). But the two cases were entirely different. Then there was an attempt to enforce circumcision as necessary to salvation: now it was performed as a voluntary act, and simply on prudential grounds. Those who insisted on the ceremony in the case of Titus were Christians, who were endeavoring to burden the Gospel with the yoke of the Law: those for whose sakes Timothy became obedient to one provision of the Law were Jews, whom it was desirable not to provoke, that they might more easily be delivered from bondage. By conceding in the present case, prejudice was conciliated and the Gospel furthered: the results of yielding in the former case would have been disastrous, and perhaps ruinous, to the cause of pure Christianity.

If it be said that even in this case there was danger lest serious results should follow, that doubt might be thrown on the freedom of the Gospel, and that color might be given to the Judaizing propensity; it is enough to answer, that indifferent actions become right or wrong according to our knowledge of their probable consequences, and that St. Paul was a better judge of the consequences likely to follow from Timothy's circumcision than we can possibly be. Are we concerned about the effects likely to have been produced on the mind of Timothy himself? There was no risk, at least, lest he should think that circumcision was necessary to salvation, for he had been publicly recognized as a Christian before he was circumcised, and the companion, disciple, and minister of St. Paul was in no danger, we should suppose, of becoming a Judaizer.

And as for the moral results which might be expected to follow in the minds of the other Lycaonian Christians, it must be remembered that at this very moment St. Paul was carrying with him and publishing the Decree which announced to all Gentiles that they were not to be burdened with a yoke which the Jews had never been able to bear. St. Luke notices this circumstance in the very next verse after the mention of Timothy's circumcision, as if to call our attention to the contiguity of the two facts. It would seem, indeed, that the very best arrangements were adopted which a divinely enlightened prudence could suggest. Paul carried with him the letter of the Apostles and elders, that no Gentile Christian might be enslaved to Judaism. He circumcised his minister and companion, that no Jewish Christian might have his prejudices shocked. His language was that which he always used, 'Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing. The renovation of the heart in Christ is everything.' Let every man be persuaded in his own mind." (Rom. 14:5) No innocent prejudice was ever treated roughly by St. Paul. To the Jew he became a Jew, to the Gentile a Gentile: 'he was all things to all men, if by any means he might save some.' (1 Cor. 9:20-22)

Iconium appears to have been the place where Timothy was circumcised. The opinion of the Christians at Iconium, as well as those at Lystra, had been obtained before the Apostle took him as his companion. These towns were separated only by the distance of a few miles; and constant communication must have been going on between the residents in the two places, whether Gentile, Jewish, or Christian. Iconium was by far the more populous and important city of the two, and it was the point of intersection of all the great roads in the neighborhood. For these reasons we conceive that St. Paul's stay in Iconium was of greater moment than his visits to the smaller towns, such as Lystra. Whether the ordination of Timothy, as well as his circumcision, took place at this particular place and time, is a point not easy to determine. But this view is at least as probable as any other that can be suggested: and it gives a new and solemn emphasis to this occasion, if we consider it as that to which reference is made in the tender allusions of the pastoral letters, where St. Paul reminds Timothy of his good confession before "many witnesses," (1 Tim. 6:12) of the "prophecies" which sanctioned his dedication to God's services ((1 Tim. 1:18), and of the "gifts" received by the laying on of "the hands of the presbyters" (1 Tim. 4:14) and the Apostle's "own hands." (2 Tim. 1:6)

Such references to the day of ordination, with all its well remembered details, not only were full of serious admonition to Timothy, but possess the deepest interest for us. And this interest becomes still greater if we bear in mind that the "witnesses" who stood by were St. Paul's own converts, and the very "brethren" who gave testimony to Timothy's high character at Lystra and Iconium; that the "prophecy" which designated him to his office was the same spiritual gift which had attested the commission of Barnabas and Saul at Antioch,¹² and that the College of Presbyters (1

¹² Compare 1 Tim. 1:18 with Acts 13:51 to 14:21.

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Tim. 4:14), who, in conjunction with the Apostle, ordained the new minister of the Gospel, consisted of those who had been” ordained in, every church” at the close of that first journey.
