

July 12, 2025

The Way

West Valley End-Time Ministries

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recognize the
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Bible Study

Acts 16

Timothy Joins Paul and Silas

1 Paul came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was Jewish and a believer but whose father was a Greek. 2 The believers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him. 3 Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. 4 As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey. 5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

Paul's Vision of the Man of Macedonia

6 Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. 7 When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. 8 So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. 9 During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 After 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.

Lydia's Conversion in Philippi

11 From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. 12 From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

13 On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. 14 One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. 15 When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

Paul and Silas in Prison

16 Once 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 fortune-telling. 17 She 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." 18 She 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.

19 When 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. 20 They brought them before the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar 21 by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice."

22 The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods. 23 After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. 24 When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.



Bible Study

25 About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone's chains came loose. 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. 28 But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!"

29 The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household." 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. 33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. 34 The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.

35 When it was daylight, the magistrates sent their officers to the jailer with the order: "Release those men." 36 The jailer told Paul, "The magistrates have ordered that you and Silas be released. Now you can leave. Go in peace."

37 But Paul said to the officers: "They beat us publicly without a trial, even though we are Roman citizens, and threw us into prison. And now do they want to get rid of us quietly? No! Let them come themselves and escort us out."

38 The officers reported this to the magistrates, and when they heard that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, they were alarmed. 39 They came to appease them and escorted them from the prison, requesting them to leave the city. 40 After Paul and Silas came out of the prison, they went to Lydia's house, where they met with the brothers and sisters and encouraged them. Then they left.

Acts 17

In Thessalonica

1 When Paul and his companions had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue. 2 As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3 explaining 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. 4 Some 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.

5 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. 6 But 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, 7 and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus." 8 When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. 9 Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.



Bible Study

In Berea

10 As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. 11 Now 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. 12 As a result, many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.

13 But when the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, some of them went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up. 14 The believers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. 15 Those who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

In Athens

16 While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols. 17 So he reasoned in the synagogue with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there. 18 A group of Epicurean and Stoic philosophers began to debate with him. Some of them asked, "What is this babbler trying to say?" Others remarked, "He seems to be advocating foreign gods." They said this because Paul was preaching the good news about Jesus and the resurrection. 19 Then they took him and brought him to a meeting of the Areopagus, where they said to him, "May we know what this new teaching is that you are presenting? 20 You 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.)

22 Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. 23 For 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.

24 "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. 25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. 26 From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. 27 God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. 28 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

29 "Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. 30 In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. 31 For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead."

32 When they heard about the resurrection of the dead, some of them sneered, but others said, "We want to hear you again on this subject." 33 At that, Paul left the Council. 34 Some 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.



Honest Questions

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Honest Question:

Why are there so many churches and doctrines if there is only one way?

Bible Answer:

“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.”
Ephesians 4:4-6.

Jesus said, “On this Rock [Jesus] I will build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Matthew 16:18.

Comment:

There is only one Church of Jesus Christ — there has always been just one Church. It is not a denomination or institution of religion, but it is a very real “body of Christ” of which “He is the Head and Chief Cornerstone.” It knows no boundaries of culture or creed and is therefore beyond the reach of the enemy of souls who would certainly destroy it if he were able. And he has attempted to destroy the Church in various ways in the past — seeking to pollute it with false doctrine, erode its pure character with licentiousness, break down its strength with compromise, and destroy it through persecution. But the Church has withstood all the attacks of the enemy throughout the ages, just as Jesus said it would. Just before Jesus returns, Satan will launch one final attack upon the Church, the faithful followers of Christ described as the “woman” or “bride of Christ” in Revelation. John says, “And the dragon was enraged with **the woman**, and he went to make war with the last of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony [Gospel] of Jesus Christ.” Revelation 12:17.

So why are there so many denominations with varying doctrinal statements, all claiming the Bible as their authority? Church history indicates that through various doctrinal understandings and political struggles, groups of people, many sincerely so, have gravitated to different interpretations of truth that separate them from other Christians with a different understanding of points of faith. And Satan has used these differences to his advantage by creating confusion in the Christian community. Everyone wants to feel a part of a community of believers and enjoy fellowship with other Christians, but man’s attempts to establish “the right church,” “the true church,” have built systems of belief that seek more to be unique than faithful to Scripture. In order for the true followers of Christ to have any semblance of Christian fellowship, they have had to live with pride, hypocrisy, false teachings, and imperfect people. This is even evident in the messages of Jesus to the seven churches of Revelation 2 and 3, where Jesus commends each church for something good but rebukes the churches for permitting idolatry, false teachers, and corruption in their midst.

Jesus made a significant statement to the leaders of His day that I believe is worthy of note for us today. He said, “The kingdom of God [the domain of the Church] does not come with observation [in a visible form]; “nor will they say, ‘See here!’ or ‘See there!’ For indeed, **the kingdom of God is within you.**” Luke 17:20-21. Until Jesus returns, we will have to be satisfied with experiencing true community with other Christians individually, not corporately. The corporate church often breeds only pride in its members and disappointment for the sincere sinner seeking a Savior. That will soon change for God’s people as we approach the return of Jesus, for the true Church of Jesus Christ will rise up and find fellowship in the suffering that will distinguish it from the false church of the Antichrist and False Prophet! Though that time will be a very difficult time for the followers of Christ, there will be a sweetness in knowing Jesus is about to return — a sweetness shared with others anticipating the return of their Savior and finding a unique fellowship with one another!

Preparing for the Journey

Imagine This

July 12, 2025

Do you ever imagine what it will be like to see Jesus come – where you will be, what you will be doing, who you will be with, what the sky will look like when you first see Him coming through the clouds of heaven, what it will feel like to realize that your life here on earth has come to an end? Do you ever imagine what that will be like?

I think about that a lot. I wonder if I will be one of those people who has been through the Great Time of Trouble – the Great Tribulation, whether I will be in some remote area seeking the refuge of “the mountains,” or in a prison for my faith, waiting for Jesus and His heavenly armies to deliver me? Or will I have died the sleep of death and wake up to hear the sound of the voice of Christ calling me forth from the grave?

The Bible tells us there will be three groups of people who will soon witness the return of Jesus in the heavens: 1) His followers who are living when He comes, 2) believers who have died and will be resurrected to see Him coming, and 3) those enemies of Christ and His Church who are still alive, having survived all the bloodshed, famine, pestilence, and the horrific judgments of God upon a wicked world. The Bible is clear about the events that will usher in the coming of Jesus to redeem His followers and judge the wicked, destroying them with the brightness of His coming and the sword of His mouth. Sometimes I worry that the Church is unprepared to face the realities of what is soon to break upon the earth, to experience with a faith and a confidence in Christ the unbelievable drama of meeting Jesus as He breaks through the heavens in all His glory and with the myriads of angels who will accompany Him, commissioned to gather the living and the resurrected saints together from the ends of the earth to meet Him in the air! For this reason, I wish to spend the next few paragraphs seeking to describe from **a composite of Scripture** what that day is going to be like for every person on this planet. Following are the inspired scenes that tell of the sequence of events which lead up to the coming of Jesus, and what it will be like on that day.

The Surprise

As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed.

The Great Tribulation

When you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, then let those who are [Christ's] flee to the mountains. For in those days there will be tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the creation which God created until this time, nor ever shall be. But watch out for yourselves, for they will deliver you up to councils, and you will be beaten in the synagogues. You will be brought before rulers and kings for My sake, for a testimony to them. And the gospel must first be preached to all the nations. But when they arrest you and deliver you up, do not worry beforehand, or premeditate what you will speak. But whatever is given you in that hour, speak that; for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. Now brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. And you will be hated by all for My name's sake.



Preparing for the Journey

Signs in the Heavens

Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will become black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon will become like blood. The stars of heaven will fall to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. There will be a great earthquake, and on the earth there will be distress of nations, with perplexity, the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them from fear and the expectation of those things which are coming on the earth, for the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth will mourn. And then they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

The Return of Christ

Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him, even they who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, "Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?"

Now I saw heaven opened, and behold, a white horse. And He who sat on him was called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He judges and makes war. His eyes were like a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns. He had a name written that no one knew except Himself. He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called The Word of God. And the armies in heaven, clothed in fine linen, white and clean, followed Him on white horses. Now out of His mouth goes a sharp sword, that with it He should strike the nations. And He has on His robe and on His thigh a name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.

For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day. Then they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near. And it will be said in that day: "Behold, this is our God; We have waited for Him, and He will save us. This is the LORD; We have waited for Him; We will be glad and rejoice in His salvation."

The Resurrection of the Saved

Surely, I say to you, the hour is coming when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth.

I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have **fallen asleep**, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will [take to heaven] with Him those who **sleep** in Jesus. For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are **asleep**. For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord.



Preparing for the Journey

And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

Christ is risen from the dead and has become the first fruits of those who have **fallen asleep**. For since by man [Adam] came death, by Man [Jesus] also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. But each one in his own order: Christ the first fruits, afterward those who are Christ's at His coming. Flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed – in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

Our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Comments

Putting all these passages together paints for us a picture most awesome, and most awful at the same time, depending on what group any reader might find themselves in on that Day. Knowing that all this is soon to take place should give each of us cause to seek the Lord for a greater experience with Him. Paul says, "Do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts. Romans 13:11-14.

We can no longer live life as if it will never end and say to ourselves, "There's plenty of time left for me to get serious about my walk with Jesus Christ." We need to think about what it's going to be like to see Jesus coming and ask ourselves, "How do I want to be dressed to meet Him – with my own righteousness or with His perfect righteousness. How do I want to be living my life – complacent and without regard to what is appropriate for a follower of Christ to be living like – not perfect, not sinless, not what some say we must be, but certainly looking and living like a follower of Christ, consistent with our profession! I want to be at peace with myself on the day I see Jesus in all His awesome glory and power. Faith in His saving work on our behalf makes us safe with Him, but faith manifests itself in a resemblance a to Him as a follower, does it not? Imagine seeing Jesus coming in the clouds of heaven, and think of what you want your relationship with Him to be now as you look forward to that great Day! Then ask Him to guide you into a walk with Him and with His Spirit that will bear the fruit of saving faith!

References:

Isaiah 25:9; Matthew 24:29-31; Mark 13:9-14, 19, 24-27; Luke 17:24, 26-30; 21:25-28; John 5:25, 28-29; 1Corinthians 15:16-26, 50-54; Philippians 3:20-21; 1Thessalonians 4:13-17; Revelation 1:7; 6:12-17; 19:11-16.