

Acts 16:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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

Analysis

Then came he to Derbe and Lystra—Paul returns to churches planted on his first journey (Acts 14:6-20), demonstrating apostolic care for new converts. **A certain disciple... named Timotheus** (Τιμόθεος, Timotheos, "honoring God")—Timothy first appears here, though likely converted during Paul's earlier visit (1 Tim 1:2, "my true son in the faith").

The son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed—His mother Eunice and grandmother Lois possessed genuine faith (2 Tim 1:5). Yet **his father was a Greek**, creating Timothy's unique identity crisis: legally Jewish through matrilineal descent, yet uncircumcised and culturally Greek. This mixed heritage perfectly positioned him for Paul's mission to both Jews and Gentiles, embodying the gospel's transcendence of ethnic barriers while maintaining sensitivity to Jewish concerns (hence his circumcision in v. 3).

Historical Context

Written circa AD 60-62, Luke records Paul's second missionary journey (AD 49-52). Lystra, in the Roman province of Galatia (modern Turkey), was a Roman colony populated by indigenous Lycaonians, Greek settlers, and a Jewish minority. Mixed marriages between Jews and Gentiles were common in diaspora communities,

though halakhically problematic. Timothy's uncircumcised status suggests his Greek father's influence dominated household religious practice.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Ephesians 2:8 — Salvation by grace through faith

Study Questions

1. How did Timothy's mixed heritage both complicate and enhance his effectiveness in gospel ministry?
2. What does Paul's return to Derbe and Lystra teach about the importance of follow-up discipleship versus only evangelistic outreach?

Interlinear Text

Κατήντησεν δὲ εἰς Δέρβην καὶ Λύστραν καὶ οἶδού,

came he Then to Derbe and Lystra and behold

G2658 G1161 G1519 G1191 G2532 G3082 G2532 G2400

μαθητής τινος ἦν ἐκεῖ ὄνόματι Τιμόθεος υἱὸς

disciple a certain was there named Timotheus the son

G3101 G5100 G2258 G1563 G3686 G5095 G5207

γυναικὸς τινος Ἰουδαίας πιστῆς πατρὸς δὲ

woman a certain which was a Jewess and believed his father Then

G1135 G5100 G2453 G4103 G3962 G1161

Ἐλληνος

was a Greek

G1672

Additional Cross-References

2 Timothy 1:5 (Faith): When I call to remembrance the unfeigned faith that is in thee, which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois, and thy mother Eunice; and I am persuaded that in thee also.

Acts 17:14 (Parallel theme): And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still.

Acts 18:5 (Parallel theme): And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ.

Acts 14:6 (Parallel theme): They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about:

1 Corinthians 4:17 (Faith): For this cause have I sent unto you Timotheus, who is my beloved son, and faithful in the Lord, who shall bring you into remembrance of my ways which be in Christ, as I teach every where in every church.

1 Timothy 1:2 (Faith): Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God our Father and Jesus Christ our Lord.

1 Thessalonians 3:2 (Faith): And sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellowlabourer in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith:

2 Timothy 1:2 (Parallel theme): To Timothy, my dearly beloved son: Grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

Acts 19:22 (Parallel theme): So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

Colossians 1:1 (Parallel theme): Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timotheus our brother,