

Acts 16:9-15

⁶ *They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia,
having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit
to speak the word in Asia.*

⁷ *When they had come opposite Mysia,
they attempted to go into Bithynia,
but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them;*

⁸ *so, passing by Mysia,
they went down to Troas.*

⁹ During the night Paul had a vision:
there stood a man of Macedonia
pleading with him and saying,
"Come over to Macedonia and help us."

¹⁰ When he had seen the vision,
we immediately tried to cross over to Macedonia,
being convinced that God had called us
to proclaim the good news to them.

¹¹ We therefore set sail from Troas
and took a straight course to Samothrace,
the following day to Neapolis,

¹² and from there to Philippi,
which is a leading city
of the district of Macedonia
and a Roman colony.

We remained in this city for some days.

¹³ On the Sabbath day
we went outside the gate by the river,
where we supposed
there was a place of prayer,
and we sat down
and spoke to the women
who had gathered there.

¹⁴ A certain woman
named Lydia,
a worshiper of God,
was listening to us;

she was from the city of Thyatira
and a dealer in purple cloth.

The Lord opened her heart
to listen eagerly
to what was said
by Paul.

¹⁵ When she
and her household
were baptized,
she urged us,
saying,
"If you have judged me
to be faithful to the Lord,
come and stay at my home."

And she prevailed upon us.

Revelation 21:10, 21:22 – 22:5

*⁹ Then one of the seven angels
who had the seven bowls
full of the seven last plagues
came and said to me,*

*"Come, I will show you the bride,
the wife of the Lamb."*

*¹⁰ And in the spirit
he carried me away
to a great, high mountain
and showed me
the holy city Jerusalem
coming down out of heaven from God.*

*¹¹ It has the glory of God
and a radiance like a very rare jewel,
like jasper,
clear as crystal.*

*¹² It has a great, high wall
with twelve gates,
and at the gates twelve angels,
and on the gates are inscribed the names
that are the names of the twelve tribes of the Israelites:*

*¹³ on the east three gates,
on the north three gates,
on the south three gates,
and on the west three gates.*

*¹⁴ And the wall of the city
has twelve foundations,
and on them
are the twelve names
of the twelve apostles
of the Lamb.*

*¹⁵ The angel who talked to me
had a measuring rod of gold
to measure the city
and its gates and walls.*

*¹⁶ The city has four equal sides,
its length the same as its width,
and he measured the city with his rod,
twelve thousand stadia;
its length and width and height are equal.*

*¹⁷ He also measured its wall,
one hundred forty-four cubits
by human measurement,
which the angel was using.*

*¹⁸ The wall is built of jasper,
while the city is pure gold,
clear as glass.*

*¹⁹ The foundations of the wall of the city
are adorned with every jewel;
the first was jasper,
the second sapphire,
the third agate,
the fourth emerald,*

*²⁰ the fifth onyx,
the sixth carnelian,
the seventh chrysolite,
the eighth beryl,
the ninth topaz,
the tenth chrysoprase,
the eleventh jacinth,
the twelfth amethyst.*

*²¹ And the twelve gates
are twelve pearls,
each of the gates
is a single pearl,
and the street of the city
is pure gold,
transparent as glass.*

²² I saw no temple in the city,
for its temple is
the Lord God the Almighty
and the Lamb.

²³ And the city has no need
of sun or moon to shine on it,
for the glory of God is its light,
and its lamp is the Lamb.

²⁴ The nations
will walk by its light,
and the kings of the earth
will bring their glory into it.

²⁵ Its gates will never be shut by day—
and there will be no night there.

²⁶ People will bring into it
the glory and the honor of the nations.

²⁷ But nothing unclean will enter it,
nor anyone who practices abomination or falsehood,
but only those who are written
in the Lamb's book of life

¹ Then the angel showed me
the river of the water of life,
bright as crystal,
flowing from the throne of God
and of the Lamb

² through the middle of the street of the city.
On either side of the river is the tree of life
with its twelve kinds of fruit,
producing its fruit each month,
and the leaves of the tree are
for the healing of the nations.

³ Nothing accursed will be found there any more.
But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it,
and his servants will worship him;

⁴ they will see his face,
and his name will be on their foreheads.

⁵ And there will be no more night;
they need no light of lamp or sun,
for the Lord God will be their light,
and they will reign forever and ever.

John 14:23-29 or 5:1-9

¹⁸ *"I will not leave you orphaned;
I am coming to you.*

¹⁹ *In a little while
the world will no longer see me,
but you will see me;
because I live,
you also will live.*

²⁰ *On that day
you will know
that I am in my Father,
and you in me,
and I in you.*

²¹ *They
who have my commandments
and keep them
are those
who love me,*

*and those
who love me
will be loved
by my Father,*

*and I will love them
and reveal myself to them."*

²² *Judas (not Iscariot) said to him,
"Lord, how is it*

*that you will reveal yourself to us
and not to the world?"*

²³ Jesus answered him,
"Those who love me
will keep my word,
and my Father will love them,
and we will come to them
and make our home with them.

²⁴ Whoever does not love me
does not keep my words,
and the word that you hear
is not mine
but is from the Father
who sent me.

²⁵ "I have said these things to you
while I am still with you.

²⁶ But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit,
whom the Father will send in my name,
will teach you everything
and remind you of all
that I have said to you.

²⁷ Peace I leave with you;
my peace I give to you.

I do not give to you
as the world gives.

Do not let your hearts be troubled,

and do not let them be afraid.

²⁸ You heard me say to you,
‘I am going away,
and I am coming to you.’

If you loved me,
you would rejoice
that I am going to the Father,
because the Father
is greater than I.

²⁹ And now
I have told you this
before it occurs,
so that when it does occur
you may believe.

³⁰ *I will no longer talk much with you,
for the ruler of this world is coming.*

*He has no power over me,
³¹ but I do as the Father has commanded me,
so that the world may know
that I love the Father.*

*Rise,
let us be on our way.*

OR or 5:1-9

¹After this
there was a festival of the Jews,
and Jesus went up to Jerusalem.

²Now in Jerusalem
by the Sheep Gate
there is a pool,
called in Hebrew Beth-zatha,
which has five porticoes.

³In these lay many
ill, blind, lame, and paralyzed people.

⁵One man was there
who had been ill for thirty-eight years.

⁶When Jesus saw him lying there
and knew that he had been there a long time,
he said to him,
“Do you want to be made well?”

⁷The ill man answered him,
“Sir, I have no one
to put me into the pool
when the water is stirred up,
and while I am making my way
someone else steps down ahead of me.”

⁸Jesus said to him,
“Stand up, take your mat and walk.”

⁹At once the man was made well,
and he took up his mat
and began to walk.

Reading Acts This Week

This fencepost accounts for Paul entering Asia,
According to Acts' agenda
The lectionary skips the unfamiliar place names
But take a moment on a map

It's also a 'they' passage, not a 'we' passage,
Reflecting different source voices,
Or a literary device to offer an implied author

As with Peter getting over *kasrut*,
Acts gives Paul a vision to get over the border
As compulsion or permission

Lydia is in import-export business in luxury goods,
With authority to baptize her whole household,
And to provide hospitality to the visiting apostles

Mitzi Smith draws attention to her speaking,
Unlike the muted Dorcas-Tabitha earlier
More than a passive recipient of gospel

My preaching notes introducing Lydia include:

<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2007/05/as-for-me-and-my-house-acts16.html>
<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2010/05/lydia-makes-party.html>
<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2016/05/easter-changes-enlisting-help-divine.html>

(of course, they get arrested next)

<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2016/05/ascension-freedom-from-or-for.html>

Reading Revelation This Week

This fencepost, 2nd of 3 weeks closing Revelation
(after skipping quicker through most of the book!)
Offers lots of elaboration of this city of God

The lectionary omits much of the detail,
to get to a general dazzling impression
of light without mediation or barrier

How do you visualize the tree of life?
I used to preach this as mirroring Genesis,
Garden to garden, city to city...

Here are some notes from this century

<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2001/05/city-without-church.html>

<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2011/10/sharing-promise.html>

<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2013/05/gated-communities.html>

<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2022/05/city-views.html>

You'll find the whole thing online, with audio,
www.hereticslikeus.com

Reading the Gospel This Week

John 14 gets 4 different lectionary readings,
But this excerpt is least familiar to me
Anticipating the gift of the Spirit,
according to the Beloved Disciple
in this Fourth Gospel

What can I learn from your reading of this?

As noted under the Acts above, I tried 9 years ago:

<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2016/05/easter-changes-enlisting-help-divine.html>

From a few verses earlier, still the Paraclete as the topic:

<http://www.billbrucewords.com/2017/05/who-needs-parakeet.html>

I guess some stuff doesn't get finished before you retire.