

ACTS LESSON 16

Acts Chapter 16

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Memory verses for this week: *2 Th 3:4 And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you. 2 Th 3:5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.*

Introduction: In Chapter 15, we saw Paul and Barnabas travel down to Jerusalem to help settle the issue about the Gentiles being taught by certain men that they must be circumcised and keep the law of Moses in order to be saved. They had never taught this in Antioch or any place they had preached. This was settled and great joy came on the church when the truth was broadcast to all the churches.

The chapter closed with Paul leaving on a missionary trip with Silas while Barnabas left with John Mark on his missionary work. We discussed earlier how that Paul and Barnabas were at odds about John Mark because he had left the first trip without completing the work. God used this to accomplish even more in the work. And ultimately, Paul and John Mark became great friends and worked together to spread the Gospel.

In this chapter, the fullness of Paul's second missionary journey is recorded. Though having begun in Syria and Cilicia, the major focus will be Macedonia and Europe. While abroad, Timothy and Luke join Paul. The latter portion of Acts 16 deals with Paul's ministry at Philippi; specifically, the incident of the soothsaying girl, his arrest and notably the conversion of the jailer.

I. The Call of Timothy

Acts 16:1 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:

Acts 16:2 Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.

As Paul left Cilicia, he returned to where his first journey had ended, Derbe and Lystra. Note is made of "a certain disciple there, named Timotheus." Though it is not explicit, Timothy very well may have been converted to Christ when Paul had

made his first journey to the area several years earlier. His mother, though not named here was Eunice (II Timothy 1:5) and his grandmother was Lois. In writing to Timothy years later, it is evident that both his mother and grandmother were godly women.

2Ti 1:5 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.

2Ti 3:15 And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Not only was his mother a godly woman, she was a faithful woman. Without a question, that godliness and faithfulness instilled the spiritual character traits into Timothy which prepared him for the ministry. A faithful, spiritual woman will have a profound effect upon her children. In fact, most of the great men God has used had godly mothers (Moses, Daniel, David, Samuel, Paul and more).

The comment that his mother was a Jewess is significant in that Jews even to this day follow the lineage of the mother in determining if one indeed is a Jew. Little is known of Timothy's father other than he was a Greek. He very well may have been deceased at this time. In verse 3, the imperfect tense is used referring to his father implying he no longer was alive. When Paul wrote about twelve years later to Timothy as a pastor in his first epistle (I Timothy 4:12), even then, Paul noted Timothy as young. Therefore, it might be assumed that here Timothy was a teenager nearing adulthood.

Timothy was chosen to help Paul in the ministry. The phrase well reported of is translated from the word (marturew) martureo which is most commonly translated as to 'witness.' It is used in the imperfect tense and passive voice and has the idea that Timothy had been thoroughly observed by those in the church. They had witnessed his godly character and evident gift for serving God in a full-time way. Noted also is that brethren from as far away as Iconium were aware of this godly young man and had witnessed his Christian character.

Acts 16:3 Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek.

Paul, in further noting this godly young man and aware of his reputation in the churches of the area, desired to take Timothy with him. No doubt, Paul saw great potential in Timothy as an assistant and therefore wished to groom him and

train him for a greater ministry in the future. This training with Paul prepared Timothy for his future ministry in the pastorate.

Paul perceived a problem. Because Timothy had a Jewish mother, he would be considered a Jew by the Jewish world they would meet. However, because his father had been a Greek, he never had been circumcised. An uncircumcised Jew was objectionable to the observant attendees of the synagogues of that day. Paul, knowing he would be visiting synagogues in new communities deemed it wise to have Timothy circumcised.

In so doing, he was not compromising or acquiescing to Judaizers within the church who taught circumcision was necessary for salvation. Paul simply sought to remove hindrance to the ministry. There was opposition enough to be faced by the very offense of the gospel. He did not need further controversy because a young assistant, as a Jew, had never been circumcised. It is noteworthy that Paul refused to have Titus, a full-blooded Greek, circumcised as recorded in Galatians 2:3-5.

Gal 2:3 But neither Titus, who was with me, being a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised:

Gal 2:4 And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:

Gal 2:5 To whom we gave place by subjection, no, not for an hour; that the truth of the gospel might continue with you.

Paul had visited Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe on his previous missionary journey and the people there had wanted to worship he and Barnabas as gods. Later on, they totally switched their feelings and endeavored to stone Paul to death. (Acts 14:11-19) On this second trip, we see the brethren commending Timothy who had been converted through Paul. The church believed that Timothy was called of God to give his life in the ministry of the word.

We see in Paul's letter to Timothy, he calls Paul his son in the Lord.

1 Tim 1:18 This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare;

There are several things pointed out about Timothy in these verses. His mother was a Jewess, but his father was a Greek. We see that Timothy had a good report from the brethren there in Lystra and Iconium. We find in verse 3 that Timothy had been circumcised in order that he might not be thought of as well

with the Jews who were strong in the traditions and laws of the Old Testament. We know his mother's name was Eunice and his grandmother's name was Lois due to the record II Timothy 1:5.

2 Tim 1:5 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.

2 Tim 1:6 Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.

2 Tim 1:7 For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

We see from these scriptures and the earlier one in I Timothy that Timothy had been instructed in the scriptures from a child, and was saved under Paul's ministry. When you are instrumental in leading someone to the Lord, it gives a special love between you and that individual. Several of our members here in our church have come to know the Lord due to our witnessing on visitation, and I have a deep love for each of them and a close bond that I don't think will ever be broken. We can give someone money or food, and tomorrow they will possibly need more. But with salvation, it is eternal, and no greater gift could be shared as Paul did with young Timothy.

Acts 16:4 And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem.

Acts 16:5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.

Paul, Silas, and now Timothy continued going to various cities where churches had been planted and "delivered them the decrees for to keep." This, no doubt, is a reference to the letter which the Jerusalem church had sent to Antioch and other churches as noted in chapter 15. As Paul and his missionary team went from church to church, the churches were "established in the faith, and increased in number daily."

The word translated as established (stereow stereoo) has the sense of 'strengthened.' (The modern word steroids derives therefrom. As the early churches were strengthened in the faith, they became more fruitful and God rewarded their efforts as many souls were saved.

As they traveled through the cities, they delivered unto the brethren the decisions which had been reached by the apostles and officers of the church there in

Jerusalem. They were to keep these rules and follow them.

Acts 15:28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

Acts 15:29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

We see that the churches were established in the faith and increased in their number daily. What a joy to see others come to know Christ as Lord and Savior.

II. The Spirit Guides Paul to Macedonia

Acts 16:6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia,

Acts 16:7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.

Acts 16:8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas.

Along with Phrygia, the “region of Galatia” is mentioned officially for the first time. Though Paul had done some of his work in the southern part of this region earlier, it is noted specifically here for the first time. It is recorded that he went throughout both Phrygia and Galatia. We are not told all of the communities he went to, but it evidently was more than just Iconium, Derbe, and Lystra. Of interest is that Galatia is the region from where the Gauls had migrated to Europe and formed the region later known as Gaul. While evidently contemplating whether to go to the province of Asia (the region of and beyond Ephesus), they “were forbidden of the Holy Ghost” to preach the Word there.

Exactly how the Holy Spirit so indicated this is not indicated. It may have been by some not-known closed door. It may have been an unmistakable lack of peace of heart about the matter. In any event, it was not God’s will for them to go there at that time. Again, we are not told why. Paul later had a rich ministry in the province of Asia which is the southern and western-most portion of the country today called Turkey.

Upon arriving in the region of Mysia, which was just to the north of the province of Asia, they “assayed to go into Bithynia.” The word translated as assayed (peirazwpeiradzo) has the sense of ‘attempted.’ Bithynia was a region along the south shore of the Black Sea (known as the Euxine Sea then). It was a region of summer retreats where the prosperous of the region resorted to escape summer heat as cool breezes swept across the Euxine Sea.

Whether that had any bearing upon Paul's interest in going there is not indicated. However, in any event, "the Spirit suffered them not." Once again, the Holy Spirit, by means not revealed, impressed upon them, they were not to go to Bithynia. They therefore passed the region of Mysia and descended to the sea-level port city of Troas. Adjacent to Troas was the site of the more famous ancient Greek city of Troy and the origin of the Trojan horse.

Paul and his company had intended to go into Asia, but they were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia. When the great commission was given, was it not to go into the whole world and preach the gospel to every creature? If so, why then was Paul not allowed to go to these specific places. We do not always understand all things and God's timing, but it appears that the people were not yet ripe for the gospel in Asia as they were in other parts. Paul was tender to the leading to the Holy Spirit, and went exactly where God would have him to go. Later on, we find Paul went to Ephesus, the chief city of Asia, and had great success and many were saved.

Acts 19:1 And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples,

Acts 19:2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost.

Acts 19:3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism.

Acts 19:4 Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.

Acts 19:5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Acts 19:6 And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.

Acts 19:7 And all the men were about twelve.

In John Calvin's commentary on Acts, he gives his opinion as to why Paul was not allowed to enter Asia at this time. "Here there arises another, more difficult question: why did the Lord forbid Paul to speak in Asia, and why did he not allow him to come to Bithynia? If we answer that these Gentiles were unworthy of the doctrine of salvation, we have to ask why Macedonia was more worthy. Those who try to be exceedingly wise say that the distinction is because the Lord considers worthy of his Gospel those whom he sees to be ready to obey. But God himself says something quite different—namely, that he appeared plainly to those who were not looking for him and that he spoke to those who were not asking about him. Where do we get an aptness to be taught or a mind to obey

but from His Spirit? So it is certainly not by merit that some people are preferred before others; everyone is equally hostile to faith by nature.” How true that we are all the enemies of God, and none are truly worthy of salvation.

*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.
Acts 16:10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.*

While at Troas, God gave Paul a vision one night. In the vision, he saw a man of Macedonia. Macedonia, then as even today, was a region of northern Greece, not to be confused with another region further north in the Balkan peninsula adjacent to modern Croatia and Bosnia also known as Macedonia.

How Paul perceived he was from Macedonia apart from his invitation is not noted. It may have been his dress or distinctive accent. In any event, the man prayed him. The word so translated pray (parakalewparakaleo—in the present tense) has the sense of ‘pleading’ or ‘begging.’ The idea literally is, ‘In coming over to Macedonia, HELP US!’ The word translated as help (bohyew boetheo) is in the imperative mode.

The man Paul saw in the vision was pleading for help. God’s time was evident. Hearts were open and prepared in Macedonia. God said, ‘Go there!’ After sharing with the other men what he had seen during the night, they assuredly gathered the Lord had called them to preach the gospel in Macedonia.

They immediately sought to go over into Macedonia. It is noteworthy that the pronouns used change at this point from they to we. What is evident is that Luke here joined with Paul. Luke was now a first-hand witness and partner with Paul on his missionary journey.

III. Paul and His Company in Philippi

*Acts 16:11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;
Acts 16:12 And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.
Acts 16:13 And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.*

As soon as arrangements could be made, they 'loosed' from Troas. The word translated as loosing (anagwanago) is a nautical term, meaning to put to sea or of loosing the moorings of a ship. They sailed 'with a straight course to Samothracia.' Samothracia was an island in the Aegean Sea about mid-way between Troas as and their intended Macedonian port of Neapolis. Paul made the journey across the Aegean in two days. Later in Acts 20:6 in returning the same way, it took five days. Here, evidently, the winds were favorable.

The name of the port city of Neapolis in Greek, literally means 'new town' and probably had been developed by the Romans over other ports in the area. Upon setting foot upon the mainland, the gospel for the first time (of record) was officially being taken to Europe and the west. They immediately traveled the short distance to the city of Philippi. Though Philippi was not the largest city of the region, it is here noted as "the chief city of that part of Macedonia."

Philippi had been founded hundreds of years earlier by Philip of Macedon, the father of Alexander the Great. Later, when the Romans conquered the region, Octavius had planted a Roman colony there for veteran Roman soldiers. In establishing a military outpost, he also had constructed what amounted to a miniature type of Rome there. Paul was coming into not only a gentile city, but a wholly Roman city. Latin probably was the predominant language though the region. Paul and his party spent an unspecified amount of time there.

In gentile cities not having enough Jews to support a synagogue, devout Jews would often meet on the Sabbath day for prayer. The Rabbinical decree stated that there must be a minimum of ten established men to build a synagogue. Frequently, this meeting place was near a stream or body of water for ceremonial cleansing prior to prayer. Paul and his party located just such a place and went there on the next Sabbath day and found a number of "women which resorted thither."

We see that Paul saw a man in a vision bidding him to come over to Macedonia to help them. It says after this, they endeavoured to go there and to preach the gospel to them. They board a ship in Troas and head for the country where God desired for them to go. The we mentioned is all those with Paul, and we know that Dr. Luke had joined them, so there was at a minimum of Paul, Timothy, Silas, and Luke at this time.

I love how that these men moved immediately at the call of the Lord. Too many times we question and slow the work of the Lord by our doubting or failure to respond. We see that after they arrive in Macedonia, Paul and his companions come to the chief city of the country, Philippi. When the Romans conquered the Greek empire, they divided this country into provinces, and made Philippi one of

the chief cities and a colony. We see that after several days, they went out to a prayer meeting outside of the city by the river. This was a group of women, and we know Paul's vision had been of a man calling. But God does things sometimes in ways that we may not understand.

IV. The first Soul Saved in Europe

Acts 16:14 And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

Acts 16:15 And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.

At this place of prayer was a "woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira." This woman was quite probably a gentile, though evidently a proselyte of the gate. That is, she was a gentile seeking the God of Israel, though perhaps not fully converted to Judaism as yet. She was a business woman. (Implied is that she may have therefore been a widow.) Her trade was in the purple dye commerce.

The distinctive Roman purple was extracted from shell fish of the region. It was a profitable business. It may further be implied that she was a woman of some means. Lydia heard Paul and his party that fateful Sabbath day. It is noted that the Lord had opened her heart so that "she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." Only God can open the heart. See Luke 24:25-31 for how Jesus opened the spiritual eyes of the disciples on the road to Emmaus.

Luk 24:25 Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken:

Luk 24:26 Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?

Luk 24:27 And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.

Luk 24:28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further.

Luk 24:29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us: for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them.

Luk 24:30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them.

Luk 24:31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight.

God perceived a woman seeking the truth and seeking Him. In fulfillment of John 7:17, Lydia willing to do his will, had her heart opened to the truth by the Holy Spirit. What clearly is implied is that she heard the gospel and believed. She was born again. Upon receiving Christ, Lydia was scripturally baptized along with her household. Some have tried to force the heresy of infant baptism into the word household. The term actually refers to her household servants or employees. They, in hearing the gospel, likewise received Christ and followed in believers baptism.

Lydia invited Paul and his party (a total of four) to lodge in her home. Evidently, they were reluctant as noted in that she finally constrained them to so stay. The reference to her being faithful may be an allusion to her moral character. They therefore could lodge in her home without fear of a damaged reputation. In as much as she had room for their party, it may be implied she was of some means. Though nothing more is recorded of her beyond this chapter, she undoubtedly formed part of the foundation of the church at Philippi.

In Paul's later correspondence to the Philippians, no mention is made of her. She may have returned to her home community of Thyatira and became a part of the founding of that church.

Is it not unusual that the first person saved here in Europe is a traveler from Thyatira. Lydia was a fine business woman and here business had taken her there. But she worshipped God, and came out to this prayer meeting. When Paul preached the gospel of Jesus to them, she opened her heart and was saved. We see that immediately she was baptized after being saved which is the Lord's desire. She then offered her house for a place of lodging for the missionaries.

V. Demon is cast out by Paul

Acts 16:16 And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying:

Acts 16:17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which show unto us the way of salvation.

And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying. Mention is made again of them going to prayer which was their purpose indicated in verse 13. So this incident took place some time after Lydia's conversion. This

is implied by the use of the present tense of went (poreuomaiporeuomai) (i.e., 'were going'). In any event, Paul was met by "a damsel possessed with a spirit of divination." The literal translation of this phrase is 'a slave-girl having a spirit of Python.'

The word translated as possessed (ecwecho) is the word commonly translated as 'have' or 'having' in this case (present active participle). The word translated as divination (puywnPuthon or 'python') originally was a reference to the mythological serpent Python which guarded the oracle at Delphi, slain by Apollo of pagan Greek idolatrous mythology. In later use, the word Python came to be used of ventriloquists or those having 'another voice.' It was an idiom of the day for a demonic spirit speaking through a human.

As noted, this damsel "brought her masters much gain by soothsaying." The word translated soothsaying (manteuomai manteuomai) could basically be rendered as a 'fortune-teller.' This slave-girl was used commercially by her masters. She evidently was known throughout Philippi.

The woman followed Paul and Silas and cried out "these men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation." Reading these verses without careful study may make one think she was heralding Paul's ministry. Her manner and actions only served to embarrass and detract from Paul's message. This woman was known as a soothsayer (fortune teller) with a demonic spirit. This association certainly did no good for Paul's ministry.

Upon looking more closely at what she crowed reveals a classic Satanic method of counterfeit. There is no article in the Received Text prior to the phrase "way of salvation" recorded by Luke. This fortune-teller was crowing to all who would hear that Paul was preaching a way of salvation. Satan will often create a counterfeit which is similar to the truth, yet totally false. The message of Christ is not a way of salvation. It is the way of salvation.

Acts 16:18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.

Acts 16:19 And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers,

After putting up with this demonic annoyance for "many days," Paul commanded the spirit "in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." The phrase "same hour" was idiomatic having the sense of 'immediately.' The casting out of this demon was not by Paul's authority or power. Rather, he commanded the demon

to leave by the authority of the name of Jesus Christ. Satan's minions, though rebellious, nevertheless tremble at the name of Jesus.

When the masters of this unfortunate slave girl figured out what had happened and that she no longer had a spirit of divination, they were not happy about it. a. They then seized Paul and Silas and forced them to the marketplace. Evidently, like an American town square, there the local authorities maintained their offices. They are noted here initially simply as rulers (arcwn arson).

Acts 16:20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city,

Acts 16:21 And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.

The authorities here are called magistrates which was the title of the highest level of municipal authority in a Roman colony. The depraved business men noted that these men were Jews. Though Judaism was a common throughout the Roman Empire, there certainly is a hint of anti-Semitism implied. Jews were legally allowed to practice Judaism, but there is obvious disdain of their ethnic heritage.

The pompous businessmen continued dishonestly accusing Paul and Silas of troubling their city in teaching customs which were "not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe being Romans." These guys were infuriated that their slave girl no longer could tell fortunes and in retaliation presented a devious charge against Paul and Silas.

Though Judaism was legal, it was illegal to proselyte Romans citizens. Moreover, Romans citizens were expected to worship the Emperor. They, perhaps in ignorance, made no distinction between Judaism and Christianity. However, in retaliation against them, they brought trumped up charges that Paul and Silas were proselyting Romans for what they considered to be an adjunct form of Judaism.

It still happens, and a record was given by J. Vernon McGee in his study on Acts. "Don't think this was just foolish superstition. This girl was possessed by a demon. We are seeing a resurgence of demonism in our own day. I have before me now a letter from a Christian woman in El Paso, Texas. She got tied up in spiritism by just fooling around with it, not thinking that it was dangerous. She has quite a story. It was hearing the Word of God through our radio program that delivered her from it. She cried out to God, and He delivered her. Demonism is a reality. This girl in Paul's day was demon possessed. She was a slave girl and her master were using her to make a big profit."

I want to add that it was unclear when this lady was saved in this account from Brother McGee. If the lady was lost and then saved, I would put confidence in the story. I personally don't think any Christian can be demon possessed because the Holy Spirit comes and indwells in the believer, and God is greater than any demon and would never let a demon possess us. But I do believe that demons still possess the lost, and only through Christ can we be totally rid of them.

We know that young lady saw Paul and his company for who they were... servants of the most high God that showed men the way of salvation. We see by the name of Jesus Christ that Paul casts the evil spirit from the young lady. Because of this good deed, the master of the lady caught Paul and Silas and brought them before the leaders of the city and accused them of making trouble. When a man of God stands up and preaches against evil (whatever evil it is from alcohol, dancing, movies, gambling, homosexuality, fornication, etc.), be sure that it will trouble the city. And God needs more men to stand up and take a stand in our nation today. I saw in the headlines of a newspaper a while back that the ACLU sent a letter to every high school in the state of Texas threatening them with a lawsuit if they had prayer before the football games. It is a sad day when we let a so called liberties union dictate what we can do and say. I praise the Lord for those who are standing up and ignoring the threats. God help a nation that says on its coins, "In God we trust" and then turns around and commands that no one pray to that God.

In the Believer's Study Bible, W.A. Criswell said this about the girl with the spirit of divination.

16:16 This "spirit of divination" is meaning "spirit of python." Python was the serpent at Delphi destroyed by Apollo. Apollo was known as Pythios Apollo, his female priestess at Delphi being called Pythia. Apollo was properly suggested in this verse, since he was the mythical god of prophecy. About A.D. 50–100, Plutarch maintained that the term applied to ventriloquists, and earlier in the LXX those having familiar spirits were called ventriloquists (Lev. 19:31; 20:6, 27; including the witch of En Dor in 1 Sam. 28:7). It is possible, therefore, that the slave girl had this same spirit of divination, probably a demonic one, for the girl "brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling." The exorcism caused the girl's owners to make charges which resulted in the jailing of Paul and Silas.

1W.A. Criswell, *Believer's study Bible [computer file], electronic ed., Logos Library System*, (Nashville: Thomas Nelson) 1997, c1991 by the Criswell Center for Biblical Studies.

VI. The Multitude Turn on Paul and Silas.

Acts 16:22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them.

Acts 16:23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely:

Acts 16:24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

After hearing these trumped up charges draped with a pseudo Roman patriotism, a mob atmosphere was incited. The magistrates ordered the clothes of Paul and Silas to be ripped off and for them to be beaten. This no doubt is to what Paul referred to later of “being shamefully entreated. . . at Philippi” in writing to the Thessalonians, 1Thes 2:2.

1Th 2:2 But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.

Jewish custom restricted a public beating to 39 strokes. The Romans were not so encumbered. The severity of beating was at the judgment of the magistrate. We are not told to what extent Paul was beaten, though it evidently was by rods (II Corinthians 11:25) and was to such a degree that many bloody stripe type of lacerations were laid upon his back.

Upon completing the beating, the missionaries were “cast into prison.” The word translated as cast (ballw ballo) literally means to throw. Though sorely wounded, Paul and Silas were literally and physically thrown into a dungeon type of cell. Roman prisons typically had an outer ward where lessor prisoners were held. However, the inner prison, similar to more modern solitary confinement (known in modern prison jargon as ‘the hole’) was where the maximum security and worst incarceration was.

There, they placed them both in foot stocks. Not only was this further security, it forced them to remain in one position. With the wounds they had, it only compounded their suffering and discomfort.

We see that because they were so popular with the leaders, they were given an accommodation from the city and a free meal. Far from it.. it says they beat them and laid many stripes upon them, and put them in stocks. Being on God’s side is not necessarily a fun and glamorous job. But praise the Lord for those who are faithful unto the end.

VII. Conversion of the Philippian Jailer

Acts 16:25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

Acts 16:26 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed.

Acts 16:27 And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.

At midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them. We are not told what time of day they were thrown into jail. They may have dozed some. But by midnight, they were wide awake. Rather than being consumed in their troubles, they “sang praises unto God.” The word translated as praises (‘umnew humneo) is the verb form of (‘umnov) humnos from which the English word hymn derives. In other words, Paul and Silas sang hymns of praise. Their singing was loud enough that the other prisoners in the rest of the prison heard them.

Suddenly, and without warning, God sent an earthquake such that the very foundations of the prison were shaken. Ancient door hinges often were a simple ‘L’ type of bolt with a piece of wrought iron shaped in a ring around it. The earthquake shook the doors off their simple hinges.

Whether the loosing of their bonds was a simple result of the earthquake or of more specific divine intervention, we are not told. In any event, their bonds were loosed. The “keeper of the prison waking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open” assumed the prisoners had all escaped.

It was Roman policy that if a prisoner escaped, the jailor would be executed. Jailers therefore had a vested interest in making their jail secure. The jailor therefore in distress prepared to commit suicide and get it over without prolonging the agony of official execution.

Acts 16:28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.

Acts 16:29 Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,

Acts 16:30 And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?

Acts 16:31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.

Paul in perceiving what was happening announced that they all were still there. The jailor after calling for a light, rushed in, no doubt, with relief and yet

apprehension. He perhaps had heard the singing of praise by Paul and Silas even in his sleep. He knew it was not some drunken tune. Their singing praise to God perhaps had been a testimony which pierced his heart. The quake no doubt had added further conviction. No ordinary prisoners were these. With a great mixture of elation, conviction, and fear; he “came trembling and fell down before Paul and Silas.”

In verse 30, in deep conviction, the jailer pled, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” God caused Paul’s trial to work together for good. Not only was this man saved, but his entire household would follow suit. Paul replied with the gospel in its distilled simplicity. The word translated as believe (pisteuw pisteuo) is in the imperative mode. It is a forceful command, yet simple.

The additional comment pertaining to “thy house” simply implies that they too would be saved if they believed on the Lord Jesus Christ after having heard the gospel. As noted in verse 34, before the night was over, his entire house (i.e., household) believed.

Acts 16:32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

Acts 16:33 And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.

Acts 16:34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.

Both Paul and Silas “spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.” As the wee hours of the morning passed, they were able to present the gospel of the saving grace of Jesus Christ to this man and his entire family. Before dawn, they were all saved and knew it. The jailer then took them, cleaned their wounds, and was baptized, “he and all his, straightway.” He then took them into his own home, fed them, and “rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.”

We see that instead of sitting around and feeling sorry for themselves, they began singing praises to God. Boy there is something magnetic about true Christian believers. We live a way beyond the circumstances, knowing God is in total control. A popular radio preacher once said that we need to “Worry about nothing, and Pray about everything.” I believe that is excellent advice. Paul and Silas may have been hurting, but they were willing to suffer for their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. God sent an earthquake and loosed their bands and opened the prison doors. The jailor was ready to kill himself, since he would be put to death for letting a prisoner escape. But apparently those prisoners had gotten saved by the gospel.

Paul says to do himself no harm, for they were all still there. If I've ever seen one common thing about prisoners, it is a sure thing that they will head out the door the moment they get a chance. But the door was open, and they all stayed. I believe Paul and Silas had a great effect on these men. This jailer now asks about how to be saved... he knew these were no ordinary men. And notice how simple and straight the message was... "Believe on the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." The gospel never has been complicated, although man makes it difficult with all his additions and requirements that are added.

VIII. Paul Refuses to Depart

Acts 16:35 And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.

Acts 16:36 And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.

Acts 16:37 But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.

Come morning, the authorities who had dealt so harshly with the missionaries, decided to release them. Perhaps, they were given pause to consider by the earthquake overnight. Perhaps, it was a belated sense of justice. Perhaps, Lydia, as a prominent citizen, brought influence to bear. It may have been a combination of the three. The newly converted jailor, upon hearing this, no doubt, rejoiced and then urged Paul to "go in peace."

Paul, in responding to the officers, jarred them with the charges that the local authorities had mishandled them as Romans. Both Paul and Silas were Roman citizens. It was a violation of Roman law, dating back to B.C. 248, to inflict blows upon a Roman citizen. It was a further violation of Roman law to incarcerate a Roman citizen without due process of law. The city of Rhodes had lost its free status because at one point they had crucified a Roman citizen.

During the frenzied, near mob action of the day preceding, Paul had been allowed no chance to defend himself and was denied the due process of law. The local authorities could face serious criminal charges. They potentially faced not only the wrath of the Roman government, but also of local citizenry for jeopardizing their status. Paul further stunned the officers by reminding them that they had been openly abused. They therefore would not be privately discharged. Therefore, the local magistrates would have to come and personally release them.

Acts 16:38 And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.

Acts 16:39 And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city.

Acts 16:40 And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.

Upon learning of Paul and Silas' citizenship, the magistrates were shocked and frightened perhaps for their very lives. They were forced to humble themselves and politely asked them to leave town personally. Paul and Silas after leaving the prison, returned to Lydia's house in part perhaps to pick up their luggage, but more importantly to encourage the brethren.

Evidently, a number of people had been saved besides the jailor, his family, and Lydia, during his ministry at Philippi. These became the nucleus of a church which possibly met in Lydia's home. Paul and Silas then began their journey further south after their work was finished. It is noteworthy from the incident of the fortune-telling slave girl noted in verse 17, that Luke no longer uses the first person, plural 'we.' No mention is made of either Luke or Timothy being arrested. Where they were, we are not told.

Evidently, they were not with Paul at the time he and Silas were seized, beaten, and jailed. Timothy is mentioned again in Acts 17:14. However, Luke does not use the first person 'we' again until Acts 20:7. Again, no mention is made of why or what.

When the rulers find out that Paul was a Roman citizen, they feared. Free-born citizens of the Roman empire were entitled to trial and should never have been cast into prison uncondemned. I think it is interesting to note that Paul could have called out that he was a Roman, and would never have been beaten. But he did not, willing rather to suffer for the cause of Christ. Oh that we might have that kind of love for the Lord. After the magistrates came and brought them out of the prison, they went to the house of Lydia and then departed from the city.

Phil 3:10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death;

Phil 3:11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

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Prov 4:18 But the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.

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