

History in the Making
"Understanding the Book of Acts-Part Twenty-Eight"

Introduction: After Barnabas and Mark separated, Paul and Silas embarked on a second evangelism tour.

- ✓ Had to deal with controversy over the circumstances of Timothy
- ✓ Sought for clarity in their next season of ministry

Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. 7 After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. 8 So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them. Acts 16:6-10 NKJV

Now they come to Philippi:

- Because of favorable winds—finished it in two days across the North Aegean Sea. NOTE: Return journey in 20:6 took 5 days.
- Day one arrived at Samothrace, mountainous island rising to 5,000 feet—seat of highly patronized mystery cult—the worship of Cabri.
- Next day to Neapolis, modern Kavalla, port of Philippi—10 miles inland.
- Paul and Silas walked to Philippi along Egnatian Way (Important road built by Romans-2nd Century B.C.)
- Philippi-named after Philip II-father of Alexander the Great
- Came under Roman control in 3rd Macedonian war in 168 B.C.
- Near Philippi (42 B.C.) was fought war resulting in victory of Mark Antony and Octavian (later Emperor Augustus) over Brutus and Cassius who assassinated Julius Caesar
- After this war it became a Roman colony
- Macedonia was divided into 4 districts in 168 B.C. (Philippi part of 1st district)
- As a Roman colony-they followed Roman law

I. The Faith of Lydia

And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met there. 14 Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. 15 And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us. Acts 16:13-15 NKJV

A. Practice of Paul was to visit first the Jewish synagogue in a new city

1. Apparently no regular synagogue
2. Required 10 men to have a synagogue
3. Women could not make up for absence of a man

B. Obviously a place where women gathered habitually for prayer (at riverside)

1. Even if no synagogue—the women gathered
2. Paul and his team found them there

C. Lydia converted

1. God-fearing Gentile
2. From Thyatira—people skilled in manufacturing of purple dye
3. One of the 7 churches of Asia Minor (Lycus Valley)
4. Probably a large Jewish community (synagogue in Thyatira) where she learned to worship God
5. She became a believer in Christ as they talked (first European convert)

D. Lydia acts on her faith

1. She had family baptized (all of her servants)
2. Persuaded them to stay with her—hospitality
3. Practicing her faith

NOTE: Acts 16:14

"The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul."

UNDERSCORES: Salvation comes by grace completely. Wesley—Prevenient Grace—gets heart ready

TRUTH: YOU ARE NEVER FIRST WITNESS

II. The Deliverance of the Slave Girl

Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. 17 This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation." 18 And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out that very hour. Acts 16:16-18 NKJV

NOTE: 2nd person converted in Philippi (very different from first-Lydia) also from 3rd a Philippian jailer

- A. Spirit of divination gripped this slave girl (fortune-teller—"pythonic spirit") person inspired by Apollo-Greek deity associated with giving of oracles or "words of future-telling."-worshiped as Pythian god at shrine of Delphi in Greece
- B. This girl's voice was regarded as the voice of the god-much in demand by people wanting to know their future
- C. Daily she follows Paul and Silas
 - 1. Advertised them as servants of the God Most High
 - 2. God Most High-convenient common???? for supreme being for Jew and Gentile
- D. Paul annoyed-exorcises the demon
- E. She was twice bound
 - 1. Economically and spiritually-exploited by her master
 - 2. Satan's tactics have not changed in 2,000 years

NOTE: Ambiguous claims regarding salvation bring danger to the church

III. Paul and Silas Jailed Then Set Free (16:19-40)

A. Paul and Silas imprisoned

But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities. 20 And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, "These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; 21 and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe." 22 Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded them to be beaten with rods. 23 And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. 24 Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. Acts 16:19-24 NKJV

1. Owners angry at lost profit have missionaries seized. (Exorcized their means of income)

NOTE: Luke (Gentile) Timothy (1/2 Greek) were with them but not molested

2. Roman colonies have magistrates that dealt with such matters (accused of stirring trouble)
3. Ordered to beat them with rods
 - a. No real investigation
 - b. Considered proselytes
 - c. 5-6 years later Paul wrote

Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 2 Corinthians 11:25 NKJV

4. Placed in jail-chains/stocks on feet
 - a. More than 2 holes
 - b. Stretched out to cause the greatest discomfort
 - c. Retired Roman soldier-taught many qualities-kindness was not one of them

B. Midnight jailbreak

But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. 26 Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed. 27 And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. 28 But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." 29 Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. 30 And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household." 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. 33 And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. 34 Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household. Acts 16:25-34 NKJV

1. Despite the uncomfortable situation, the other prisoners heard NOT complaint, but PRAISE at midnight!

Tertullian: *"The legs feel nothing in stocks when the heart is in heaven."*

2. The earthquake opened all doors and broke all chains—no one escaped—the impression of Paul and Silas
3. The jailer awakened/saw all doors opened—going to kill himself (only honorable action)
4. Paul's words

But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." Acts 16:28 NKJV

5. Trembling he turned on the light, fell down and asked, "What must I do to be saved?"
6. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ"—then they explain it to whole household
 - a. He washed their stripes
 - b. They baptized the whole family
 - c. They ate together

"He washed them from their stripes and was himself washed from his sins."

Paul's attitude later: He has authority to say this:

But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel. Philippians 1:12 NKJV

Do all things without complaining and disputing, 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world. Philippians 2:14-15 NKJV

Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. 18 For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me. Philippians 2:17-18 NKJV

Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice! Philippians 4:4 NKJV

I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. 13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Philippians 4:12-13 NKJV

C. Paul and Silas leave Philippi

And when it was day, the magistrates sent the officers, saying, "Let those men go." 36 So the keeper of the prison reported these words to Paul, saying, "The magistrates have sent to let you go. Now therefore depart, and go in peace." 37 But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us openly, uncondemned Romans, and have thrown us into prison. And now do they put us out secretly? No indeed! Let them come themselves and get us out." 38 And the officers told these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Romans. 39 Then they came and pleaded with them and brought them out, and asked them to depart from the city. 40 So they went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they encouraged them and departed. Acts 16:35-40 NKJV

1. Magistrates order their release and Paul and Silas are informed

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2. Paul balked (why not appeal to citizenship before beating?-Citizenship in heaven?)
3. Fear of magistrates-could get in major trouble
4. Begged them to leave
5. Before they left went to Lydia's house
6. Still hospitality shown

Conclusion: The New Testament church grew stronger and stronger-conflict along the way!

Reminder of prologue:

The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach Acts 1:1 NKJV

- ✓ To Theophilus
- ✓ What he began to do
- ✓ Still doing it
- ✓ Peter

Then Peter said, "Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk." Acts 3:6 NKJV

— Prayer for boldness

To do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. 29 Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word. Acts 4:28-29 NKJV

Now—church marches on—chains broken!

- TRADITION that blinds one to the Gospel (Lydia)
- TORMENT that keeps one insulated from the Gospel (Slave girl)
- TYRANNY that threatens the effectiveness of the Gospel!