

The Book of Acts
Chapter 16 – The Second Missionary Journey Part 2

Acts 16:23-25

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

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

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

I. Review

1. In the last lesson, we began studying Paul and Silas' second missionary journey that began in Derbe and Lystra. On Paul's first journey, these were the last cities they preached in, but on their second journey, they began in those cities.
2. The young man Timothy joined the missionary team them in Lystra.
3. After the Holy Ghost told them they could not go southwest into Asia, they traveled northwest toward Bythinia, but the Spirit of Jesus forbade that journey, so they waited in Troas.
4. It was in Troas that God showed Paul a vision of someone in Macedonia asking them to come and help them, so that is what they set out to do. From their home city of Antioch, they had now traveled around 1000 miles.

II. To Macedonia

A. Luke joins the journey

1. I want to point out something very important in verse 10 that would be easy to overlook.

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

2. Luke, the author of the Book of Acts, begins to use the first-person plural pronoun "we" in several places through the rest of the book. What could that mean? That is an indirect way that Luke lets us know that he joined Paul's missionary journey in Troas.
3. That is why there are three chapters of minute details of this journey. Luke journaled many details of this journey like you would in a travel diary.
4. And They took a boat from Troas, and sailed across the northwest corner of the Aegean Sea by way of the island of Samothracia to the Macedonian seaport of Neapolis. **[map: Troas, Macedonia]**

III. Paul at Philippi: introduction (Verses 11-15)

A. Philippi

1. Philippi which was the chief city of that region, so preaching there would sow the gospel seed at the center of the main operations and interests of the people, from which point

it would spread into all that region.

Acts 16:11-13

11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;

*12 And from thence to **Philippi**, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a **[Roman] colony**: and we were in that city abiding certain days.*

2. What were they waiting for? Probably to search out where Jews meet on Saturday, the Sabbath. Being a Roman colony, meaning it was settled by citizens of Rome, and it is quite possible there was no synagogue.
3. The translation notes in the New English Translation state that to form a synagogue, it required 10 men.
4. They learned some women met for prayer by a river side.
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.
5. **Interesting point: Map of Asia/Europe** – Turkey is on the Anatolian Peninsula that bridges Asia with Europe. This is the first record of the gospel being preached on the European continent (we should be glad for that Macedonian call—Europeans brought the gospel to the US).

B. Who is Lydia

1. Lydia was a business woman from the city of Thyatira in western Asia Minor (famous for its purple dye), was likely a proselyte to Judaism, since she worshipped the Lord with those Jews who met on the sabbath days.

Acts 16:14-15

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.

2. She sold royal purple cloth which she obtained from her home city of Thyatira. **[Map: Lydia, Philippi]**
15 And when she was baptized, and her household [the first Europeans to be baptized], 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.
3. She seems to have had a lucrative business and, having financial means, she insisted that the missionaries should come into her home, if they considered her worthy. And they did.

IV. Paul Casts Out the Demon of Divination (Verses 16-24)

A. Spirit of phthon/divination cast out

1. As guests in Lydia's home, Paul and his company went regularly to the place of prayer there by the riverside.
2. And on the way to church, a demon-possessed slave girl followed them and cried out to the people, speaking about Paul and the team:

Acts 16:16-17

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:

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

3. The girl had a “spirit of divination,” which in Greek is literally, “the spirit of python.” Paul did indeed take up serpents. This devil was able to tell fortunes, and made money for some unscrupulous men who exploited her demonic power.
4. She continued to do this over many days:
Acts 16:18 And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved [greatly annoyed], 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.
5. And when the adversary annoys us, command him to depart.
6. Jesus had also rebuked demons that confessed Him to be the Son of God and told them to be quiet. Why? People might associate His identity with these evil spirits.
7. And Paul, not only for the purpose of freeing the girl, but also for silencing any ideas of association with evil, commanded the evil spirit, in the name of Jesus, to come out of her.
8. The girl was instantly delivered from this evil spirit. The girl was a demon-possessed slave, but now she was free.

B. Problems with masters

1. She was also free from the power of python and fortune telling, so her masters were not happy with this deliverance. This is the event that got Paul and Silas in jail. Her masters dragged them into the marketplace to the magistrates—the colonial authorities:

Acts 16:20, 22-23

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

22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them [with rods or sticks].

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

2. The fast-spreading rage of the crowd did not take time to understand that they had no authority to punish Paul and Silas.
3. As Roman citizens in this Roman colony, they had the right to a just and fair trial before the accusers, before any punishment was given. This immediate crowd punishment had violated Roman law.
4. But, because they were recognized as Jews who had stirred trouble in the city, that was enough to stir up mob violence. Beat them up now, ask questions later.
5. So after stripping them of their clothing, a public humiliation, they were beat with rods and thrown in jail.
6. Later Paul would write of the perils he had endured in his ministry, including this kind of treatment:

2 Cor 11:24-25

24 Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

25 Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep;

7. Paul explained that being a minister of Christ, there are difficulties to be endured along the way. This, as well as daily bearing the care of the churches on his mind.
8. For most of us, our ministry hardships are hurt feelings from an unkind look or word spoken.
9. When we are dealing with our “church troubles,” it would be good for our perspective to lay our sufferings alongside Paul’s sufferings.
10. Then after being charged and whipped:
Acts 16:24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.
11. Stocks were instruments of punishment consisting of two timbers, having half circular cut-outs, which clamped over the ankles and held them in a vise-like grip [**stocks**].

V. The Opening of the Prison (Verses 25-34)

1. You could say Paul and Silas were having a bad day. But the truth was, they were freemen in a prison. They were free to pray and sing praises to God at that midnight hour.
Acts 16:25 And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.
2. It is the same Paul who later would write (while a prisoner), “If God be for us, who can be against us.”
3. This brings to mind the persecution Peter and John endured in Jerusalem when were beaten. They rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of their Lord who had suffered for them (Acts 5:41).
4. When the other prisoners heard them praying and singing at midnight, I wonder what they were thinking. Complaining about their singing? or glad to receive Holy Ghost hope into their dark and desperate dungeon.
5. But their song was interrupted by an intense liberating shaking:
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.
6. Suddenly, the prisoners found themselves free, but none of them tried to escape.
Acts 16:27-28
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.
28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.
7. The prison warden knew the punishment was death for allowing a prisoner to escape, so he drew his sword to kill himself rather than face that fate.
8. We should think how this jailer’s situation is not too different from many people we encounter. Deaths of despair happen when someone wants to end their lives to escape what seems to them to be complete loneliness and doom before them.
9. But the church stands in their way saying, do yourself no harm, we are here!

10. The jailer then called for a light and fell down before Paul and Silas with fear and trembling, and asked an unusual and amazing question.

VI. The Way of Salvation (Verses 30-34)

A. Songs at midnight

1. *Acts 16:29-30*

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

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

2. Why would he ask them that question?
3. The jailer seems to have known that Paul and Silas preached the way of salvation.
4. It is possible he had previously heard them preach in the market place, or maybe he had heard what the demon-possessed girl had said:
Acts 16:17 The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.
5. These events were enough to make him ask that question that his soul was now crying out.
6. His question was just like the question that was asked of Peter and the apostles in Acts 2:37, **Men and brethren, what shall we do?**
7. They told him that to be saved he must believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. That is the exact starting place for a Roman soldier who knew nothing of God's salvation.

B. Believe and be baptized

1. And they also explained what it meant to believe on Jesus:

Acts 16:31-33

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

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

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

2. There is no need to be baptized if you don't believe that Jesus died for your sins.
3. And there is no reason to be baptized unless you first repent of your sins believing that Jesus will forgive them.
4. That is the message Paul and the rest of the apostles preached everywhere.
5. There is only one way of salvation for all people. Men can be saved only through faith in what Jesus Christ has done, and they must express their faith by obedience to His word.
6. So, in those early morning hours, Paul baptized that family.
7. I wonder if this was the man from Macedonia Paul had seen in the vision calling out for them to come and help.
8. It does not say these were filled with the Holy Ghost, but that seems to be assumed:
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.
9. Jesus said that they which believe on Him would receive the Holy Ghost.

10. Revival that started with some women at a riverside, continued with the deliverance of a demon-possessed slave girl, and continued with the salvation of a Roman prison warden and his family.

VII. The Departure of Paul and Silas from Philippi (Verses 35-40)

1. By morning, the magistrates who had ordered the beating and imprisonment of Paul and Silas, had a change of mind and sent word to the jailer to release the men and tell them to leave the city.

2. But Paul was not willing to leave quietly. This tells a little about Paul's character:

Acts 16:37-38

37 But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned [without due process], 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.

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

3. The public condemnation, humiliation, and beating that they had received could no doubt harm their reputation among the people as law breakers.

4. And it would also endanger the lives of other Jews or the new Christians if Paul had let this legal oversight slip by without being corrected.

5. When the message about citizenship was brought to the magistrates, they immediately were much concerned and came and publicly apologized to them.

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

6. After the magistrates' apology, Paul and Silas went to the home of Lydia, where no doubt Timothy and Luke waited for them.

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.

7. After a farewell to the saints, they departed from Philippi to the next city.