

ACTS 16:12-40 SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY CONTINUED: TO PHILIPPI

Paul and his team had sought to move eastward into Bithynia, but God's will was to go westward across the Aegean Sea into northern Greece (Macedonia). The decision was not dictated by Paul, but by direct intervention of his risen Lord; it was He who was in charge of this operation. Once in Macedonia, Paul moved directly from the seaport of Neopolis to the first large city ten miles inland: Philippi. Chronologically, we are early in the year 51 AD.

16:12-15 At Philippi; First Convert in Europe: Lydia

- v. 12 **Philippi:** "a _____ city...and a _____."
- Named after Philip of Macedon, father of _____.
 - Strategically located on the _____ Way, trade route from Italy-Greece to Asia Minor (the East).
 - Hence of great commercial importance.
- "a colony"** = special status that made it a miniature city of Rome with the same type of constitution and laws. (Troas, Antioch of Pisidia, Lystra all enjoyed "colony" status.)
- v. 13 **"on the sabbath"** Paul's practice when visiting a city was to go first to a Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath and there present the Gospel. But at Philippi, there was none, which meant there were not _____ adult _____ Jews needed to constitute a synagogue. But there were Jewesses and God-fearing Gentile women who met by the River Gangites to pray. Paul seeks them out and tells them the Gospel.
- v. 14, 15 **"a certain woman named _____."**
- The Lord's first convert in Europe! A devout woman.
 - A God-fearer from Thyatira; a seller of famous Thyatiran dyes and garments.
 - A business woman of stature and wealth with a large household staff.
 - SHE AND HER ENTIRE HOUSEHOLD GET SAVED AND BAPTIZED!
 - She insists that Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke abide in her _____.

16:16-29 At Philippi, Another Convert (?): A Demon-Possessed Girl

- v. 16 **"a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination*"**
- *lit., "a spirit of python" (πυθωνία/puthona), a demon spirit (according to v.18), but perceived by the locals as a person inspired by Apollo, the god of divine oracles who was worshipped as the "Pythian" god at the oracular shrine of Delphi in ancient Greece.
- "much gain by soothsaying,"** i.e., "by divination" or "the uttering of divine oracles." SHE WAS THE LOCAL FORTUNETELLER CONTROLLED BY UNSCRUPULOUS MONEY-HUNGRY MEN.
- v. 17, 18 Though Paul's ministry lasted many months (6-8?) in Philippi, the exorcising of this demon spirit leads ultimately to his departure.
- v. 19 _____ and _____, both Jews (BUT ALSO ROMAN

CITIZENS UNBEKNOWN TO THEIR ANTAGONISTS), are literally dragged to the civil magistrates by the slave-girls' owners. WHY? Because they had been "exorcised" of a fruitful source of income!

What about Luke and Timothy? Apparently, both were perceived as _____.

For the only other Gentile-led demonstration against Paul, compare Acts 19:23-30, the issue there as here = \$\$\$.

v. 20, 21 They are accused before the Roman _____ (lit., praetors; Gr., *strategoï*).

- "these are vagabond Jews" (was Philippi anti-Jewish?)
- "they are causing civil unrest"
- "they are teaching unlawful religious customs"

BUT THERE WAS NO INVESTIGATION OF THESE CHARGES!

v. 22-24 With no hearing or trial, they are flogged, beaten with rods, cast into maximum security in the prison, and bound in stocks. A FATAL MISTAKE BY THE MAGISTRATES!

16:25-34 At Philippi, More Converts in Europe: Prisoners(?) & Prison Officials!

v. 25 **THEIR ATTITUDES (in jail)**

- they kept _____ (a present tense participle)
- they kept _____ (an imperfect tense verb) praises to God
- despite the hour (_____); despite the pain and humiliation
- and the prisoners kept _____ (imperfect tense also)

The power of Christ and the simplicity of the Gospel will now be manifested.

v. 26 **THEIR MIRACULOUS RELEASE**

"Everyone's bonds were loosed," apparently the earthquake freed the staples in the walls to which each was fettered. Was this a Class A or Class B miracle?

v. 27-30 **THEIR JAILER'S RESPONSE**

- v. 27 Awakened out of his sleep by the earthquake and seeing the prison doors ajar, the jailer assumes the prisoners had fled. For a Roman soldier or prison official on guard, there was only one recourse: DEATH (either by suicide or from superior officers).
- v. 28 But Paul forestalls the suicide by announcing, "NO ONE HAS FLED." This is at least a "Class B" miracle!
- v. 29, 30 Paul's words prove true; terrified, the jailer asks the most important question, humanly speaking, in the Bible: "*WHAT MUST (DEI) I DO TO BE SAVED?*"

What a great opportunity for the Lord to make salvation plain! And He does.

v. 31 **THEIR ANSWER TO THE JAILER (AND TO ALL WHO WOULD BE SAVED)**

"believe" – an aorist active imperative verb from πιστευω/pisteuo means "trust in," "rely upon," "have confidence in." In other words, "You do not do, rather, you rest upon another to be saved."

"on (epi) the Lord Jesus Christ" – rely upon, trust in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ; that is, upon all the significance of his name.

"and you (emphatic) shall be saved (future passive indicative) and your house (if each of them also believes upon Christ).

v. 32 THEIR FOLLOW-UP TO HIM AND HIS HOUSEHOLD

v. 33-34 THEIR BAPTISM OF THE JAILER AND HIS HOUSEHOLD

- the jailer washes their wounds
- he and his household are baptized
- he feeds Paul and Silas at his home
- he rejoices

WHY? “Because he and all his household have believed (perfect active participle of cause) the gospel of God.

Pedo-baptists (baptizers of babies) try to use this text to justify infant baptism, but note v.34: he and his house believed God (His gospel) and then were baptized. Only believers, regardless of age, were baptized in Acts.

16:35-40 The Aftermath: Paul Announces His Citizenship

v. 35-37 Problem for the Magistrates: Paul declares his and Silas’s citizenship!

“serjeants” = “lictors” (Latin), “hrabdouchos” (Greek); the Greek word means “rod bearer”, these were the public servants that beat Paul and Silas

Problem: Paul and Silas, both Roman citizens, had been beaten and imprisoned without an official inquiry and hearing. **Question:** Why did not Paul and Silas raise the issue before they were so abused (as he does in 22:25)? Perhaps to make the town a little more safe for Lydia and other believers to follow. Perhaps to make manifest the absurdity and dangers of the town’s anti-Semitism and thus make it more safe for Jews.

v. 38-39 Pressure by the Magistrates: The deflated praetor-magistrates apologize, but plead (imperfect tense) with them to leave town.

v. 40 “...and they (who? _____ and _____) comforted them (who? _____)! AMAZING!”

NOTE: Luke stays in Philippi while Paul, Silas, and Timothy move south to Thessalonica (modern Salonica). He apparently rejoins Paul at the end of Paul’s third journey some seven years later (as per Acts 20:5,6). By then, the church at Philippi was very stable, dynamic, and a constant supporter in every way of Paul and his team. Paul will write to these believers while under house arrest in Rome in 61 or 62 AD: the letter in our Bibles is called “The Epistle to the Philippians.”

“LYDIA, PYTHON-WOMAN, JAILER: SEE YOU IN HEAVEN!”