

# Acts 16 Commentary

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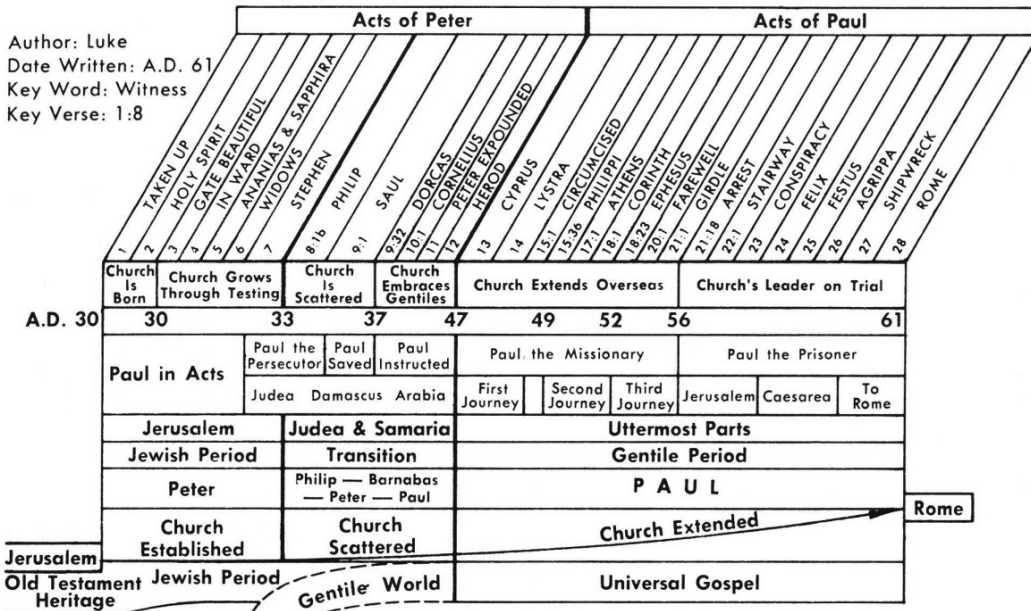
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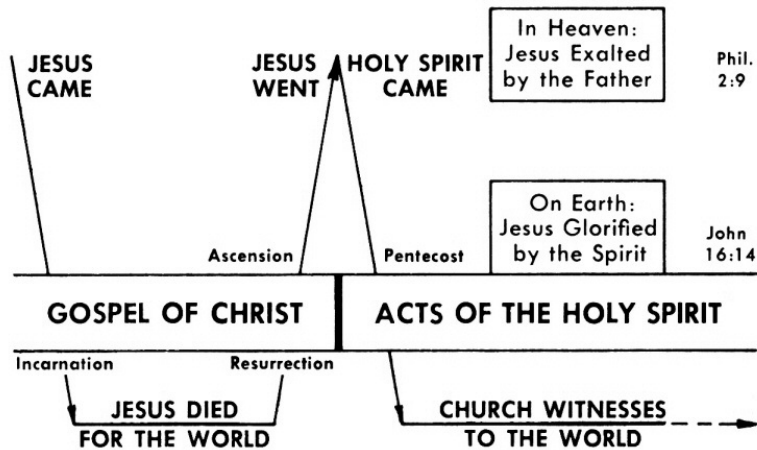
Author: Luke  
 Date Written: A.D. 61  
 Key Word: Witness  
 Key Verse: 1:8



Click chart to enlarge

Chart from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission

### THE EXPANDING WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT-EMPOWERED CHURCH



Click chart to enlarge

Considering the fact that Acts 13 is such a strategic chapter in regard to world evangelism, take a moment and study Irving Jensen's chart at top of the page (click it to enlarge it which is what I have to do at age 72!). Notice the **bold vertical line** (|) at the end of Acts 12 and beginning of Acts 13 which Jensen estimates to be about year 47 (it could be a short time prior). Note the horizontal description of "Church" - **Church Established** in the first 13 years from Acts 1 through Acts 7, then the **Church Scattered** between Acts 8 through Acts 12, which occurred over a period of about 14 years (and remember all dates and times are at best approximations because Luke gives only a few events that allow us to give specific dates, such as the death of Herod in A D 44 in Acts 12:23) and lastly, beginning in Acts 13 (and until the end of this age), the **Church Extended**, this extension being the primarily the fruit of Paul's Three Missionary Journeys which "upset the world!" (Acts 17:6) Now, you have a good grasp of the chronological context of Acts 13. And as they say in the restaurant when your delicious meal is served "Enjoy!" The three missionary journeys are summarized below (this note will be repeated in subsequent chapters). Click links for the maps of each journey.

<a href="#">Paul's First Missionary Journey</a>	Acts 13:4-14:28
<a href="#">Paul's Second Missionary Journey</a>	Acts 15:36-18:22
<a href="#">Paul's Third Missionary Journey</a>	Acts 18:23-21:26

- Maps in table above are from the **Holman Bible Atlas** ([Hardcover/Paperback version](#)) copyrighted © 1998 B&H Publishing Group, used by permission, all rights reserved. This is one of the best resources for Bible maps as the maps also include helpful short descriptions of the events portrayed on the maps. Please do not download for use on another website. Thank

you.

- [Here is a map](#) with all three journeys on one map.

## THE ITINERARY OF PAUL'S THREE MISSIONARY JOURNEYS

FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
1. <a href="#">Antioch</a> Acts 13:1-3	1. <a href="#">Antioch</a> Acts 15:36-40	1. <a href="#">Antioch</a> Acts 18:23
2. <a href="#">Seleucia</a> Acts 13:4	2. <a href="#">Syria</a> Acts 15:41	2. <a href="#">Phrygia/Galatia</a> Acts 18:23-28
3. <a href="#">Salamis on Cyprus</a> Acts 13:5	3. <a href="#">Cilicia</a> Acts 15:41	3. <a href="#">Ephesus</a> Acts 19:1-41
4. <a href="#">Paphos on Cyprus</a> Acts 13:6-12	4. <a href="#">Derbe</a> Acts 16:1	4. <a href="#">Macedonia</a> Acts 20:1
5. <a href="#">Perga in Pamphylia</a> Acts 13:13	5. <a href="#">Lystra</a> Acts 16:1-5	5. <a href="#">Greece</a> Acts 20:2
6. <a href="#">Pisidian Antioch</a> Acts 13:14-50	6. <a href="#">Phrygia/Galatia</a> Acts 16:6	6. <a href="#">Macedonia</a> Acts 20:3-5
7. <a href="#">Iconium</a> Acts 13:51	7. <a href="#">Mysia</a> Acts 16:7	7. <a href="#">Philippi</a> Acts 20:6
8. <a href="#">Lystra</a> Acts 14:6-20	8. <a href="#">Troas</a> Acts 16:8-10	8. <a href="#">Troas</a> Acts 20:6-12
9. <a href="#">Derbe</a> Acts 14:20	9. <a href="#">Samothrace</a> Acts 16:11	9. <a href="#">Assos</a> Acts 20:13
10. <a href="#">Lystra</a> Acts 14:21	10. <a href="#">Neapolis</a> Acts 16:11	10. <a href="#">Mitylene</a> Acts 20:14
11. <a href="#">Iconium</a> Acts 14:21	11. <a href="#">Philippi</a> Acts 16:12	11. <a href="#">Samos</a> Acts 20:15
12. <a href="#">Pisidian Antioch</a> Acts 14:21	12. <a href="#">Amphipolis</a> Acts 17:1	12. <a href="#">Miletus</a> Acts 20:15-38
13. <a href="#">Pamphylia</a> Acts 14:24	13. <a href="#">Apollonia</a> Acts 17:1	13. <a href="#">Cos</a> Acts 21:1
14. <a href="#">Perga</a> Acts 14:25	14. <a href="#">Thessalonica</a> Acts 17:1-9	14. <a href="#">Rhodes</a> Acts 21:1
15. <a href="#">Attalia</a> Acts 14:25	15. <a href="#">Berea</a> Acts 17:10-14	15. <a href="#">Patara</a> Acts 21:1
16. <a href="#">Antioch</a> Acts 14:26	16. <a href="#">Athens</a> Acts 17:15-34	16. <a href="#">Tyre</a> Acts 21:3-6
	17. <a href="#">Corinth</a> Acts 18:1-17	17. <a href="#">Ptolemais</a> Acts 21:7
	18. <a href="#">Cenchreae</a> Acts 18:18	18. <a href="#">Caesarea</a> Acts 21:8-14
	19. <a href="#">Ephesus</a> Acts 18:19	
	20. <a href="#">Caesarea</a> Acts 18:22	
	21. <a href="#">Jerusalem</a> Acts 18:22	
	22. <a href="#">Antioch</a> Acts 18:22	

**Charles Swindoll** points out that "When we study the journeys of Paul in the book of Acts, we're not just reading the travel log of a man; we're observing the redemptive plan of God unfolding as He promised. Through the ministry of Saul of Tarsus, God's mission to reclaim His creation from the death grip of evil would move to its next stage. The plan of this mission was outlined in the Lord's promise at His ascension, where He said,

"You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses..."

1. In Jerusalem [Stage 1: Acts 2–7],
2. and in all Judea and Samaria [Stage 2: Acts 8–12],
3. and even to the remotest part of the earth [Stage 3: Acts 13–28]." (Acts 1:8-)

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### Hiebert's Outline for Acts 16

- Gentile churches revisited, Acts 15:41-16:4
- Summary: Strengthening of the Gentile churches, Acts 16:5
- Missionary call to Macedonia, Acts 16:6-10
- Missionary work in Macedonia, Acts 16:11-17:15
- Mission in Philippi, Acts 16:11-40
- Beginning of the work at Philippi, Acts 16:11-15
- Exorcism of a demon, Acts 16:16-18
- Imprisonment of the missionaries, Acts 16:19-24
- Establishment of the work by God, Acts 16:25-40

- Conversion of the jailor, Acts 16:25-34
- Retraction by the magistrates, Acts 16:35-40

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## John Hannah's Outline for Second Missionary Journey

- C. The second missionary journey of Paul (Acts 15:36-18:22)
1. The preparation for the ministry (Acts 15:36-16:5)
    - a. The conflict between Barnabas and Paul (Acts 15:36-40)
    - b. The confirmation of the churches (Acts 15:41-16:5)
  2. The ministry in Macedonia (Acts 16:6-17:15)
    - a. The call from Macedonia (Acts 16:6-10)
    - b. Arrival at Samothrace and Neapolis (Acts 16:11)
    - c. Ministry at Philippi (Acts 16:12-40)
      1. The conversion of Lydia (Acts 16:12-15)
      2. The demon possessed slave girl (Acts 16:16-18)
      3. The imprisonment of Paul and Silas (Acts 16:19-25)
      4. The release of Paul and Silas (Acts 16:26-27)
      5. The conversion of the jailor (Acts 16:28-34)
      6. The departure from the city (Acts 16:35-40)
    - d. The ministry in Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9)
      1. The message (Acts 17:1-3)
      2. The response of belief (Acts 17:4)
      3. The response of unbelief (Acts 17:5-9)
    - e. The ministry in Berea (Acts 17:10-15)
      1. The ministry (Acts 17:11-12)
      2. The departure (Acts 17:13-15)
  3. The ministry in Achaia (Acts 17:16-18:17)
    - a. The ministry in Athens (Acts 17:16-34)
      1. His message in Athens (Acts 17:16-30)
      2. The response in Athens (Acts 17:31-34)
    - b. The ministry in Corinth (Acts 18:1-17)
      1. Arrival in Corinth (Acts 18:1-4)
      2. His ministry to the Corinthians (Acts 18:5-11)
      3. The trial before Gallio (Acts 18:12-17)
  4. The ministry on the return to Antioch (Acts 18:18-22)
    - a. In Cenchræa (Acts 18:18)
    - b. In Ephesus (Acts 18:19-21)
    - c. In Antioch (Acts 18:22)

[Hannah's Bible Outlines](#) - Recommended Resource

**Acts 16:1 Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek,**

KJV 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:

NET Acts 16:1 He also came to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple named Timothy was there, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but whose father was a Greek.

GNT Acts 16:1 Κατ νησεν ὁ [κα] ε ς Δ ρβην κα ε ς Λ στραν. κα **δο** μαθητ ς τις ν κε ν ματι Τιμ θεος, υ ς γυναικ ς ουδα ς πιστ ς, πατρ ς δ ἄ λληνος,

NLT Acts 16:1 Paul went first to Derbe and then to Lystra, where there was a young disciple named Timothy. His mother was a Jewish believer, but his father was a Greek.

ESV Acts 16:1 Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. A disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a

Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek.

CSB Acts 16:1 Then he went on to Derbe and Lystra, where there was a disciple named Timothy, the son of a believing Jewish woman, but his father was a Greek.

NIV Acts 16:1 He came to Derbe and then to Lystra, where a disciple named Timothy lived, whose mother was a Jewess and a believer, but whose father was a Greek.

- **to Derbe:** Ac 14:6,21 2Ti 3:11
- **named:** Ac 17:14 18:5 19:22 20:4,5 Ro 16:21 1Co 4:17 Php 1:1 2:19 Col 1:1 1Th 1:1 3:2 2Th 1:1 1Ti 1:2 2Ti 1:2 Heb 13:23
- **the son:** 2Ti 1:5 3:15,16
- **but :** Ac 14:1 Ezr 9:2 1Co 7:14
- **William Ramsay** - [Acts 16:1-5 History of the Churches in Galatia](#)
- **John Dick** - [Acts 16:1-18 The Mission of Paul and Silas in Macedonia](#)
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

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## SECOND MISSIONARY "TRAVELOGUE" TO UTTERMOST PART OF THE EARTH

Acts is like a [travelogue](#) and since it is easy to "get lost" let's first set the context. Remember that a **travelogue** is a talk or lecture on travel usually accompanied by a film or slides. So think of Luke's narrative as his Spirit inspired lecture on Paul's travels as he describes the manifold adventures with "word pictures" of the various places and events. As you study Acts be sure you keep a map nearby ([click this helpful map and bookmark it](#)) to which you can frequently refer to help travel along the road with Paul and Silas on their great missionary adventure (listen to [Steven Curtis Chapman's "Great Adventure"](#)). **LET'S GO!**

Look at Irving Jensen's chart at the top of the page, which reminds us that we are now seeing the apostles fulfill the last portion of Jesus' charge in Acts 1:8+

but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you (Cf JESUS' PROMISE IN Luke 24:49+); and you shall be (NOT "DO" WITNESSING BUT "BE") My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest (KJV = "UTTERMOST") part of the earth."

The **Jerusalem Council** has just met and unanimously agreed that salvation is by faith in Jesus plus nothing (not circumcision, not works of the Law) and written a letter with four directives for the Gentile believers. James speaking for the entire church declared

"Therefore it is my judgment that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles, but that we write to them that they abstain from things contaminated by idols and from fornication and from what is strangled and from blood. (Acts 15:19-20+)

It is now about 50-51 AD as Paul and Silas begin the [Second Missionary Journey](#) which officially begins in Acts 15:36+ and takes us through Acts 18:22+. To help get oriented take a moment and review [the table above](#) summarizing **Paul's Itinerary** in Acts 15:36-18:22. It will help you to know where Luke is going next in his narrative.

Remember too that the [first missionary journey \(map\)](#) took place about five years before this second missionary journey. Paul was eager to follow up the work of the Lord among these churches founded five years before, including churches in Syria and Cilicia, churches that were likely planted by Paul when he was in "exile" in Tarsus (capital city of the Roman province of Cilicia).

**THOUGHT** - Just a conjectural question - What do you think Paul had been doing regarding these churches planted five years earlier? I agree. I think these churches were continually in his prayers during those 5 years he was away. May God's Spirit enable us (for left to ourselves we will quickly get busy and forget) to daily pray for our missionaries on the field with "Pauline" zeal and faithfulness. (cf Ro 1:9, 1 Cor 1:4, Eph 1:15-16, Php 1:3-4, Col 1:3-4, 1 Th 1:2, 2 Th 1:3)

In the first missionary journey, they first headed south and west by sea to Cyprus and then north by sea to Perga at Pamphylia from which they trekked over robber infested rugged mountainous terrain to Antioch of Pisidia, then on to some success and

then persecution in Iconium, followed by some success and stoning in Lystra and finally success and relative rest in Derbe.

**Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra** - It is interesting that Luke just uses the name of **Paul** not Silas, but clearly Silas was with him. Derbe had been the furthest extension east on the first missionary journey. On Paul's first trip to Derbe he approached the small city from the east, coming from Lystra. Now he approaches from the west having traveled north from his home church in Antioch. Going north from Antioch Syria, Paul and Silas would first pass through the [Syrian Gates](#) (today known as the "Belen Pass") a pass constructed through the [Nur Mountains](#) in the southeast region of modern day Turkey. From there, the missionaries likely would have trekked to Paul's hometown of [Tarsus](#) "**strengthening the churches**" there and in the region (as Luke describes in Acts 15:41+). After **strengthening the churches** they would have traversed through the [Cilician Gates](#), an engineered pass through the [Taurus Mountains](#) connecting the low plains of Cilicia to the [Anatolian Plateau](#), by way of the narrow gorge of the Gökoluk River. The highest elevation of the Cilician Gates was about 1000 meters (3280 feet). The highest peaks in the Taurus Mountain range were about 12, 323 feet. [This picture](#) is likely similar to what Paul and Silas saw as they left [Tarsus](#) and headed toward the [Cilician Gates](#) on the way to **Derbe and Lystra**. Note that **Derbe** was not connected to **Lystra** by the paved [Via Sebaste](#), so the team would have had to traverse the last 60 miles on rugged, unpaved trails in order to reach **Lystra**, where Luke picks up the story in earnest.

As you may have already surmised Acts 16 is not the best chapter break as it continues the narrative from Acts 15:36-41

But Paul chose Silas and left, being committed by the brethren to the grace of the Lord. 41 And he was traveling through Syria and Cilicia, strengthening the churches.

In **Derbe** Paul had great success on his first missionary journey

But while the disciples stood around him (AT LYSTRA), he got up and entered the city. The next day he went away with Barnabas to Derbe. 21 After they had preached the gospel to that city and had made many disciples, they returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch, (Acts 14:20-21+).

In **Lystra**, a crowd had tried to honor Paul and Barnabas as pagan gods on the first missionary journey (Acts 14:8-20) and then they stoned him (Acts 14:19)!

Only the KJV gives a literal translation of "**Behold**" ([idou](#)) which is in the Greek text but for some reason is ignored by the modern translations. **Behold** is a word that calls attention to what follows and certainly as subsequent events would prove, the discovery of Timothy was very significant to Paul.

All **Luke's** uses of **idou** in Acts -

Acts 1:10; Acts 2:7; Acts 5:9; Acts 5:25; Acts 5:28; Acts 7:56; Acts 8:27; Acts 8:36; Acts 9:10; Acts 9:11; Acts 10:17; Acts 10:19; Acts 10:21; Acts 10:30; Acts 11:11; Acts 12:7; Acts 13:11; Acts 13:25; Acts 13:46; Acts 16:1; Acts 20:22; Acts 20:25; Acts 27:24;

**A disciple was there** - Timothy was probably a convert from Paul's previous missionary trip to Derbe and Lystra (1 Ti 1:2 "to Timothy, my true child in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.", cf 2 Ti 1:2, 1 Cor 4:17 = "Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord"). His mother and grandmother had trained him well in the Jewish Scriptures (2 Ti 1:5+; 2 Ti 3:15+), and evidently all three had accepted Christ. Timothy was no doubt aware of Paul's miraculous restoration after his stoning (Acts 14:20+ "But while the disciples stood around him, he arose and entered the city. And the next day he went away with Barnabas to Derbe."), and as far as we can tell from the text was ready and willing to go with Paul when asked.

**Disciple** (3101)([mathetes](#) from [manthano](#) = to learn which Vine says is "from a root *math*, indicating thought accompanied by endeavor". Gives us our English = "*mathematics*") describes a person who learns from another by instruction, whether formal or informal. Discipleship includes the idea of one who intentionally learns by inquiry and observation (cf [inductive Bible study](#)) and thus **mathetes** is more than a mere pupil. A **mathetes** describes an adherent of a teacher. As discussed below **mathetes** itself has no spiritual connotation, and it is used of superficial followers of Jesus as well as of genuine believers.

**Disciple** - A disciple is an adherent who accepts instruction given to him and makes it his rule of conduct.

**Related Resources:**

- [matheteuo - make disciples](#)
- Timothy - [article by James Hastings](#) in The Greater Men and Women of the Bible
- [What is the difference between a Christian and a disciple?](#)
- [What is Christian discipleship?](#)
- [Why is making disciples important?](#)

- [What does it mean to “count the cost” \(Luke 14:28\)?](#)

#### Related Resources:

- Nave Topical Bible [Timothy](#)
- Scofield Reference Index [Timothy](#)
- Thompson Chain Reference [Timothy](#)
- American Tract Society [Timothy](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Timothy](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Timothy](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Timothy](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Timothy](#), [1 Timothy](#) [2 Timothy](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible [Timothy](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [Timothy](#); [Timothy and Titus Epistles to](#)
- Morrish Bible Dictionary [Timotheus](#), [Timothy](#)
- Hawker's Poor Man's Dictionary [Timothy](#)
- People's Dictionary of the Bible [Timothy](#)
- Whyte's Bible Characters [Timothy as a child](#) [Timothy as a young minister](#)
- Webster Dictionary [Timothy](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Timothy](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Timothy](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Timothy](#) [Timothy epistles to](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Timothy](#)
- The Nuttall Encyclopedia [Timothy](#)

In his last letter Paul recalls how Timothy had become a believer writing "that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to **salvation through faith** ([pistos](#)) which is in Christ Jesus." (2 Ti 3:15). And how did Timothy know the sacred writings (THE SCRIPTURES) from childhood? Paul explains in the opening passages of Second Timothy he was "mindful of the sincere faith within you, which first dwelt in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am sure that it is in you as well." (2 Ti 1:5) These passages taken together would indicate that these two faithful, fruitful women disciples of Jesus used the Scriptures to lead Timothy to faith in Jesus Christ.

**A believer** ([4103](#))(**pistos** from **peitho** = to persuade) is translated some 44 times (NAS) as faithful which is a great description of a genuine believer in Jesus Christ. **Pistos** means dependable (worthy of reliance or trust), trustworthy, steadfast, unswerving. **Webster** says that "**Faithful**" means firm in adherence to whatever one owes allegiance and implies unswerving adherence to a person or thing or to the oath or promise by which a tie was contracted. **Pistos** describes the one who is trustworthy, which is the genre of man Paul instructed Timothy to seek to disciple "And the things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, these entrust to **faithful** men, who will be able to teach others also." (2 Ti 2:2+).

**Vincent** gives a nice summary (expanded in the discussion that follows) of the meaning of **pistos**, faithful, writing that it is used "(1), of one who shows Himself faithful in the discharge of a duty or the administration of a trust (Mt 24:45). Hence, trustworthy ([see note](#) 2 Ti 2:2). Of things that can be relied upon ([see note](#) 2 Ti 2:11). (2) Confiding; trusting; a believer (Gal 3:9; Acts 16:1; 2Cor 6:15; 1Ti 5:16)" (Word Studies in the New Testament)

**Pistos** is used in the present passage with its active meaning of trusting or believing. This sense speaks of a sinner exercising faith in the Lord Jesus. In the first NT use in this sense, Jesus "said to Thomas, Reach here your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand, and put it into My side; and be not unbelieving, but **believing**. (Jn 20:27) Paul later writes to Timothy to "let those who have **believers** (**pistos**) as their masters not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but let them serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are **believers** (**pistos**) and beloved. Teach and preach these principles." (1Ti 6:2)

When **pistos** is used in this active sense to refer to the faith which a lost sinner must place in the Lord Jesus in order to be saved, it includes the following ideas -- the act of considering the Lord Jesus worthy of trust as to His character and motives, the act of placing confidence in His ability to do just what He says He will do, the act of entrusting the salvation of his soul into the hands of the Lord Jesus, the act of committing the work of saving his soul to the care of the Lord. This means a definite taking of one's self out of one's own keeping and entrusting one's self into the keeping of the Lord Jesus. Thus Paul says

So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the **believer** (**pistos**). (Gal 3:9)

Note also that with regard to **believers**, they are spoken of sometimes in the Active sense (as **believers**) and sometimes in the Passive (as **faithful**).

The New Testament concept of **faith** includes three main elements, mutually connected and requisite, though according to circumstances sometimes one and sometimes another may be more prominent

- (1) a fully convinced acknowledgement of the revelation of grace;
- (2) a self-surrendering fellowship (adhesion) and
- (3) a fully assured and unswerving trust (and with this at the same time hope) in the God of salvation or in Christ. (Modified from Cremer)

**The son of a Jewish woman who was a believer** - Paul affirms the faith of Timothy's mother in 2 Ti 1:5. Remember that there was no notation by Luke of a Jewish Synagogue in Lystra. The question arises is when did Timothy's become a believer? Was it during Paul's first missionary journey approximately five years earlier? We cannot state with certainty, but it seems very likely that she first heard the Gospel from the preaching of Paul and Barnabas. In Acts 14:7 Luke says "**there** (the cities of Lycaonia, **Lystra** and Derbe - Acts 14:6) **they continued to preach the gospel.**" Certainly Paul's stoning at Lystra and his subsequent revival and bold re-entrance into Lystra would have had quite an impact on all the residents and would have served as authentication of his Gospel message.

**But** - This term of contrast directly following the Greek word (pistos) for believer. While we cannot state with absolute assurance, this would certainly suggest that Timothy's father was not a believer in Jesus.

**His father was a Greek** - The significance of this fact is that it would explain why Timothy had never been circumcised. Paul deemed it expedient though not clearly not required for salvation, but had this done (Acts 16:3) in order to avoid offending the Jews to whom the missionaries would be sharing the Gospel. Several commentators note that the verb tense suggest Timothy's father was deceased. Actually there is **no** verb with "father" Young's Literal reads "And he came to Derbe and Lystra, and lo, a certain disciple was there, by name Timotheus son of a certain woman, a believing Jewess, **but of a father, a Greek.**"

On mixed marriages in Judaism, see Neh 13:23-27; Ezra 9:1-10:44; Mal 2:10-16; Jub. 30:7-17; m. [Qiddushin 3.12](#); m. Yevamot 7.5.

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**Charles Swindoll** helps set the context to Acts 16 - God never causes evil. He does, however, open and close opportunities to accomplish His purpose in individual lives and in the grand scheme of history. Jesus describes Himself as "He who is holy, who is true, who has the key of David, who opens and no one will shut, and who shuts and no one opens" (Rev. 3:7). Because closed opportunities keep us from achieving what we desire, the Lord's activity can feel like a curse. Life appears barren, wasted, hopeless. Emotionally, we feel set aside, forsaken, overlooked, even abused. Even so, a closed door can be a wonderful expression of God's love. The first part of Paul's second missionary journey is a story of open doors. He had spent the last several months telling churches in Samaria, Phoenicia, and Syria about how the Lord had "opened a door of faith to the Gentiles" (Acts 14:27; cf. 15:3) on his first journey. The Council at Jerusalem had affirmed his ministry and given him written confirmation of the gospel of grace. His home church in Syrian Antioch enthusiastically commissioned him for another journey. The first leg of his voyage took him through the familiar territory of Syria and Cilicia, where people knew him and welcomed his teaching. After passing through the Taurus Mountains, he enjoyed reconnecting with the churches that he and Barnabas had previously planted in Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium. He even found a promising young student, Timothy, who was eager to learn about ministry. Then doors slammed shut. Of all the challenges Paul had overcome—robbers, enemies, illness, rejection, stoning, idolatry—the hardship of closed doors would be his greatest to date. (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary – Acts)

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### **F B Meyer - A Lesson of Guidance (ACTS 16)**

"Oh let Thy sacred will  
All Thy delight in me fulfil!  
Let me not think an action mine own way,  
But as Thy love shall sway,  
Resigning up the rudder to Thy skill."  
HERBERT.

AFTER a brief respite, Paul proposed to Barnabas that they should return to visit the brethren in every city wherein they had proclaimed the word of the Lord, and see how they fared. This was the beginning of his second missionary journey, which was to have far-reaching results.

Barnabas suggested that they should take Mark with them as before, a proposition which his companion positively refused to



entertain. Mark had deserted them on the threshold of their previous expedition, and there was grave fear that he might do so again. Barnabas was as strong on the other side. Perhaps he felt that he had some rights in the matter, as the senior in age, because of the tie of blood between himself and his sister's son. At last the contention reached so acute a stage that the Church became aware of it, and took Paul's side, for the narrative of the Acts tells us that when Paul chose Silas, and went forth, "he was commended by the brethren to the grace of the Lord."

Whenever we are about to undertake some great enterprise for God, in proportion to its importance we may expect to encounter the strong man armed, "straddling across the way." How often he attempts to overthrow us through the temper or disposition of our associates! The crew mutinies as Columbus nears the long-looked-for coast! Nothing tests us more than this. It is difficult to be resolute and gentle, strong and sweet. Beware of temptation from this side, fellow-workers. If you are compelled to differ from your companions, let it be in love; let them feel that you have no interests to serve but those of truth. If Lot quarrels with you, it is best to give him his own terms and send him away; God will give you ever so much more than he can take. Only do nothing to drive the Holy Dove of God from your bosom. Perfect love is the only atmosphere in which the Divine Spirit can manifest his gracious help.

Through regions rich in flowers and natural beauty Paul and Silas traversed Syria and Cilicia, confirming the infant churches, which probably owed their existence to Paul's earliest efforts. So through the Cilician Gates to Tarsus, his native city. But there was no welcome for him there. Probably the old home was either broken up or forever shut against him; and the two companions in travel threaded the defile in the mountains behind Tarsus, which led them up to the central plain with its volcanic deposits and biting winds. After some days' toilsome journey they came to Derbe, Lystra, and Iconium, so tragically associated with the former journey.

What a welcome Paul would receive! How many inquiries would be made after Barnabas! How much to tell and hear! There was, however, a special burden on the Apostle's heart. On the occasion of his previous visit his attention had been arrested by a mere lad, who had been strongly attracted to him, watching with a lad's enthusiastic devotion his teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, and patience, and perhaps mingling with the little group that stood around him when he sank beneath the stones of those who a few days before had offered him worship. He asked for Timothy, and was glad to learn that he had not been faithless to the teachings and training of the godly women who had watched over his opening character, and instructed him in the Holy Scriptures. It would seem that the whole family was more or less closely associated with the infant church life; so much so that, though the mother was a Jewess, she had not urged her son's compliance with the initial Jewish rite. It had therefore remained in abeyance, according to the broad and liberal views which Paul inculcated.

All the reports about Timothy were favorable. He was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. The more Paul knew of him the more he was attracted to him, and finally proposed that he should accompany him on his travels as his own son in the faith. He administered the rite of circumcision, not because he deemed it obligatory, but as a matter of convenience, that there might be no obstacle to the admission of his young assistant to Jewish synagogues.

A simple ordination service was then held, in which Timothy was solemnly set apart for his great work. The elders gathered round and laid their hands on his bowed head, and prayed. In answer to their believing intercession, he received the gift of sacred speech; and Paul, in after years, reminds him to stir up the gift that was in him through the laying on of his own hands and of those of the presbytery.

Thus the Spirit of Jesus led his servant to call new laborers into the harvest field and endow them with special qualifications for their work. It appears, indeed, that Paul had remarkable power in these directions; for, in his Epistle to the Galatians, he expressly refers to his having ministered to them the Holy Spirit by faith; and when he laid his hands on the twelve disciples at Ephesus, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied. In the old time it seems to have been possible for men of God to receive for others, and transmit to them, by faith, spiritual gifts, adapting them better for their life work. But this was altogether distinct from any mechanical communication of sacramental grace, and was the peculiar prerogative of those who were themselves richly endued with the Spirit of Jesus.

Leaving Lystra, Paul and his companions visited the churches in the highland region of Phrygia and Galatia, everywhere distributing the letter of James. They next essayed to go into the populous and influential cities of Asia Minor, such as Coloss, Laodicea, and Ephesus. What could they do better than bear the light of the Gospel to those teeming multitudes who sat in darkness and the shadow of death? Yet it was not to be: "They were forbidden of the Holy Spirit to speak the Word in Asia." In after years Paul would do some of the greatest work of his life in that very region; but just now the door was closed against him by the Holy Spirit. The time was not yet ripe for the attack on these apparently impregnable bastions of the kingdom of Satan. Apollos must come there for pioneer work. Paul and Barnabas are needed yet more urgently elsewhere, and must receive further training before undertaking this responsible and arduous task.

The travellers therefore took a northern route, with the intention of entering the important province of [Bithynia](#), lying along the shores of the Black Sea; but when they came to a point in the great Roman road, opposite Mysia, and were attempting to go out of Asia Minor into Bithynia, the Spirit of Jesus suffered them not.

Checked when they attempted to go to the West, they were now stopped as they sought to go to the Northeast; and there was nothing for it but to keep straight on, until they came out at the terminus of the road, on the seacoast, at the famous harbor of Troas, the ancient Troy. There they met with Luke, whose presence is thenceforth denoted by the significant personal pronoun we; and

thence the man of Macedonia beckoned the little missionary band across the straits to set up the banner of Christ on the hitherto untouched continent of Europe.

What an extremely attractive title that is for the Holy Spirit! He is preëminently the Spirit of Jesus. When Jesus was glorified, He was given in Pentecostal fulness, and the chief aim of his mission and ministry is to glorify the Lord Jesus and gather together the members of his Body, fitting them for union with their Head. He is also the Comforter and Guide of the saints until the Church is presented faultless to her Lord; as Eliezer conducted Rebekah to his master's son.

It is interesting to study the method of his guidance as it was extended towards these early heralds of the Cross. It consisted largely in prohibitions, when they attempted to take another course than the right. When they would turn to the left, to Asia, He stayed them; and when they sought to turn to the right, to Bithynia, again He stayed them. He shut all the doors along their route, and bolted them; so that they had no alternative but to go straight forward. In the absence of any prohibition, they were left to gather that they were treading the prepared path for which they had been created in Christ Jesus.

Whenever you are doubtful as to your course, submit your judgment absolutely to the Spirit of God, and ask Him to shut against you every door but the right one. Say, "Blessed Spirit, I cast on Thee the entire responsibility of closing against my steps any and every course which is not of God. Let me hear thy voice behind me whenever I turn to the right hand or the left. Put thine arrest on me. Do not suffer me."

In the meanwhile, continue along the path which you have been already treading. It lies in front of you; pursue it. Abide in the calling in which you were called. Keep on as you are, unless you are clearly told to do something else. Expect to have as clear a door out as you had in; and if there is no indication to the contrary, consider the absence of indication to be the indication of God's will that you are on his track.

The Spirit of Jesus waits to be to you, O pilgrim, what He was to Paul. Only be careful to obey his least prohibitions; and where, after believing prayer, there are no apparent hindrances, believe that you are on the way everlasting, and go forward with enlarged heart. "Teach me to do thy will, for Thou art my God: thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness." Do not be surprised if the answer comes in closed doors. But when doors are shut right and left, an open road is sure to lead to Troas. There Luke awaits, and visions will point the way, where vast opportunities stand open, and faithful friends are waiting.

#### Acts 16:2 and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium

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

GNT Acts 16:2 ζ μαρτυρετο π τ ν Λ στροις κα κον δελφ ν.

NLT Acts 16:2 Timothy was well thought of by the believers in Lystra and Iconium,

ESV Acts 16:2 He was well spoken of by the brothers at Lystra and Iconium.

CSB Acts 16:2 The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke highly of him.

NIV Acts 16:2 The brothers at Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him.

YLT Acts 16:2 who was well testified to by the brethren in Lystra and Iconium;

- **was** : Ac 6:3 1Ti 3:7 5:10,25 2Ti 3:15 Heb 11:2
- **Iconium** : Acts 14:21 2Ti 3:11
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### TIMOTHY'S GOOD REPUTATION

Reputation is what others think is true about you, while character is what God's knows is true about you! In Timothy's case his character and reputation were essentially the same. Our English word for that is [integrity](#) which means an undivided or unbroken completeness or totality with nothing wanting. Integrity speaks of consistency of actions, values, methods, measures, principles, expectations, and outcomes. Think of the related word integer from Latin *integer* and means "intact, whole, complete," figuratively, "untainted, upright," literally "untouched," What you saw on Timothy on the outside was a perfect reflection of what was on the inside.

**Synonyms of integrity** - honesty, uprightness, probity, rectitude, honor, honorableness, upstandingness, good character, principle(s), ethics, morals, righteousness, morality, nobility, high-mindedness, right-mindedness, noble-mindedness, virtue, decency, fairness, scrupulousness, sincerity, truthfulness, trustworthiness

**Well spoken of** ([matureo](#)) refers to a human declaration of ascertainable facts based on firsthand knowledge or experience and in

the present context refers to a good report or having a good reputation. Paul received a "good report" on Timothy. In Hebrews 11:2+ we see how men obtain a "good reputation" with God - it was "by faith" (cf Heb 11:1+). **Matureo** is in the [imperfect tense](#) which depicts others as giving a good testimony of Timothy, over and over, one after another related to Paul regarding his reputation.

**Martureo** is used to describe **Jesus** Luke recording that...

And all **were speaking well of Him**, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips; and they were saying, "Is this not Joseph's son?" (Luke 4:22+)

**Martureo** is also used of the criteria that were to be true of men who would serve the church...

But select from among you, brethren, seven men of **good reputation**, full of the Spirit and of wisdom, whom we may put in charge of this task. (Acts 6:3+)

**Robertson** comments that "Already (**Timothy**) had so borne himself that his gifts and graces for the ministry were recognized. It is a wise precaution that the approval of the local church is necessary for the licensing and the ordaining of a preacher. If God has called a man for the work signs of it will be manifest to others."

**By the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium** - **Brethren** refers to the Christian brethren, those who share a common birth, the new birth. Notice that Timothy's reputation was known not only in his hometown of Lystra, but in nearby Iconium. Lystra was about 20 miles south of Iconium about a normal day's travel in the Roman Empire at this time. How was he known in Iconium? Luke does not tell us but clearly it is in a spiritual context.

**Brethren** (80)([adelphos](#) from **a** = denotes unity + **delphus** = a womb) means brother or near kinsman. "Adelphós generally denotes a fellowship of life based on identity of origin, e.g., members of the same family (Mt. 1:2; Lk 3:1, 19; 6:14); members of the same tribe, countrymen, and so forth (Acts 3:22; 7:23; Ro 9:3)." (Zodhiates) Figuratively, **adelphos** describes members of the Christian community, spiritual brother, fellow Christian, fellow believer (Ro 8.29). Jews used adelphos to describe fellow countrymen (Acts 3:22).

**Lystra and Iconium** - See [Map of Second Missionary Journey](#). In Paul's last letter to Timothy he reminds his young disciple (who might have been a bit "timid" - see 2 Ti 1:7) of what happened to him at **Lystra and Iconium** writing

Now you followed my teaching (WHAT I TEACH), conduct (HOW I LIVE IT OUT - NOTICE THAT THIS IS DISCIPLESHIP), purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, 11 persecutions, and sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch (NOT ANTIOCH IN SYRIA - HIS HOME CHURCH BUT ANTIOCH OF PISIDIA IN TURKEY), at **Iconium and at Lystra**; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me! (A REMINDER THAT THE LORD WOULD BE HIS DELIVERER ALSO) (2 Ti 3:10-11)

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### Kitto - Daily Bible Illustrations - Timothy—Acts 16:1–3

In contemplating the journey before him, Paul probably felt that the absence of Barnabas would be likely to place him at some disadvantage; for not only had Barnabas been with him as an equal laborer in the previous visit to the same places, but the name of Barnabas was joined in commission with his own in the apostolic decree, at least so far as regarded the authoritative promulgation of the decree to the churches.

The wise providence of God had, however, provided for this exigency by the fact that one of the two distinguished persons who had been sent by the church at Jerusalem to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas, as vouchers for the decree, in which they are, indeed, expressly named, still remained at Antioch. This was Silas; and it is at once apparent, even to us, that this was the most suitable person to be his companion for the intended journey, whom it could be well possible to find as a substitute for Barnabas. He was a leading man in the church; he was endowed with special gifts; the church at Jerusalem had avouched his character and qualifications; and Paul had been enough in his company to know that he should find in him a valuable coadjutor. Silas readily responded to the call thus made upon him; and the two, having been in united prayer "recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God," set forth upon their important journey. That journey, though it included all the places where churches had been founded in the former missionary tour with Barnabas, became much more extensive than had been originally contemplated. It commenced, however, by the intended visitation of the churches formerly established. They were, however, visited in a reverted order, those being first reached which had been established last in the previous journey. Departing from Antioch, Paul and Silas necessarily passed through the northernmost part of Syria, and the eastern part of Cilicia, "confirming the churches" in their way. These were, no doubt, churches which had been of earlier establishment. Their names are not given, but we may be allowed to suppose that on this occasion Paul once more saw his native city of Tarsus.

They then passed into Lycaonia, lying to the north of Cilicia, and we find them once more at Derbe; but of the circumstances of this, any more than of the former visit to this town, no particulars are given. They now proceeded on their way, and passing the gate

before which was the temple or image of Jupiter, stood within the streets of Lystra, where Paul had been first worshipped as a god, and then stoned as an offender. All that is recorded at this place relates to the acquisition of an addition to the missionary party, in the person of a young convert named Timothy. This youth seems to have been a native of Lystra—the son of a Jewish mother, but of a Greek father. He had been very carefully brought up, even from a child, by his grandmother and his mother, in the knowledge of the Old Testament Scriptures, which had thus become familiar to him; and, under such holy training, he inherited, in full measure, the “unfeigned” Messianic “faith that dwelt first in his grandmother, Lois, and his mother, Eunice.” The soil being thus prepared, received favorably the good seed which Paul had sown, in his former visit to these parts. His name, indeed, does not occur in that journey; but we now see that the young man was already a Christian when Lystra was revisited; and as Paul addresses him as “his own son in the faith,”—that is, one converted by himself, it is clear that his conversion must have taken place in the former journey. It was but lately that we called attention to a passage in one of Paul’s epistles to this person, in which he appeals to his intimate knowledge of the persecutions he had endured at Antioch, at Iconium, and at Lystra; and this knowledge was probably personal, at least at Lystra, at which place—if that indeed was his ordinary residence—he had been doubtless an eye-witness of the evil treatment the apostle received, and was probably one of “the brethren” who stood mournfully around him as he lay for dead.

What Timothy had heard from Paul, what he had witnessed of his conduct, the example he had so unostentatiously offered of valor for the truth, could hardly fail to make the most profound and salutary impression upon a mind so youthfully impressible as his. It was nutritive; and blessed by the Divine Spirit, it so ministered to his spiritual growth, that by the time Paul had now come back, he had become a marked person in the esteem of the brethren in this and the neighboring towns, particularly at Iconium. His love to Christ was so touchingly profound, his faith so invincible, his devotedness so entire, his zeal so fervent, his endowments so manifest, that the local churches cherished the belief that notwithstanding his delicate health and “often infirmities,” eminent services in the church of Christ might be expected from him. Paul heard of this before he again saw him, and the tidings filled his heart with joy. He gladly yielded to the young man’s entreaty to be permitted to attend him in his journey; and very soon the apostle conceived for his young convert that beautiful paternal regard which shines through his epistles to him, and which will to many minds appear as one of the most charming things in the history of Paul.

Before, however, Paul took Timothy with him, he thought proper to subject him to the initiatory Jewish rite. This has occasioned some perplexity, seeing that not long ago Paul had very firmly, and with the sanction of the apostles of the circumcision, resisted the attempts made to impose this rite upon Titus. Some of the early Christian writers made much of this difficulty, and could not surmount it but by supposing that a similar concession had subsequently been made in the case of Titus—a most unwarrantable and wholly needless supposition. The cases were altogether different, and sufficient to explain and justify a difference of procedure. Titus was wholly a Greek; and the object in his case was to withstand false teachers, and protect the flock from their requisitions. In the case of Timothy, the object was to procure admission for him into the synagogues in which the Gospel had not yet been preached, and with which Paul had to connect his labors but to which he could not otherwise have had access. Paul testifies of himself that to the Jews he became a Jew, to win those who would not else be won. Of Timothy he asked no more than this: and he was entitled to ask it; for, according to the Jewish rules, the child should follow the mother, so that the son of a mixed marriage, whose mother was a Jewess, should be circumcised, otherwise (and the Roman Catholic Church now makes similar conditions) the marriage would not have been recognized by the Jewish law. This had been neglected in the case of Timothy, probably from the opposition of the father. The Jews of the neighborhood must have been aware of this; and he would not have been admitted among them had not Paul made good the omission.

**Acts 16:3 Paul wanted this man to go with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.**

KJV 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.

NET Acts 16:3 Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was Greek.

GNT Acts 16:3 το τον θ λησεν Πα λος σ ν α τ ξελθε ν, κα λαβ ν περι τεμεν α τ ν δι το ς ουδα ους το ς ντας ν το ς τ ποις κε νοις· δεισαν γ ρ παντες τι λλην πατ ρ α το π ρχεν.

NLT Acts 16:3 so Paul wanted him to join them on their journey. In deference to the Jews of the area, he arranged for Timothy to be circumcised before they left, for everyone knew that his father was a Greek.

ESV Acts 16:3 Paul wanted Timothy to accompany him, and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those places, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

CSB Acts 16:3 Paul wanted Timothy to go with him, so he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews

who were in those places, since they all knew that his father was a Greek.

NIV Acts 16:3 Paul wanted to take him along on the journey, so he circumcised him because of the Jews who lived in that area, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.

- **wanted** Ac 15:37,40
- **took** Ac 15:20 1Co 7:19 9:20 Ga 2:3,8 5:1-3,6
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL TAKES TIMOTHY INTO MISSIONARY PARTY

**Paul wanted this man to go with him** - **This man** (touton) is literally "this one" and is first in the sentence for emphasis. As noted above Timothy had a good reputation not only in Lystra but also in Iconium. He had a believing mother and grandmother who were Jewish and a Greek father. One has to believe that Paul did not just rely on the excellent external markers, but that he also prayed for guidance and was led to seek out this man for his missionary service. Paul later refers to Timothy as his "**true child in the faith**" (1 Ti 1:2) and his **beloved son** (2 Ti 1:2+), which taken together would support the fact Timothy had been birthed into the kingdom by the Spirit and Paul's proclamation of the Gospel.

And Timothy would have had no delusions of grandeur about some great, exciting missionary adventure, for he had either witnessed first hand or had certainly heard the stories about Paul being stoned for preaching the Gospel. In short Timothy would have counted the cost of partnering with Paul and yet it did not deter him from joining the team.

**Barclay** writes that Paul "was always well aware of the necessity of training a new generation for the work and for the days that lay ahead."

**Wanted** (2309)(**thelo** see derivative **thelema**; synonyms **boule** and **boulomai**) is a very common NT verb (208x) which primarily refers to exercising of one's will with the underlying sense of to be willing, to desire, to want or to wish (in Jn 15:7 in context of prayer). **Thelo** "expresses not simply a desire, but a determined and constant exercise of the will." (W E Vine)

Blalock adds that "The preoccupation with character in those who assume Christian leadership is a marked feature of the story of the early Church ([Acts 16:2, 6:3, 10:22, 22:12)

**Vincent** on **go with him** - The word (1831 - exerchomai) is used of going forth as a missionary in Luke 9:6; 3 John 7.

All of **Luke's** uses of **exerchomai** in Acts - Acts 1:21; Acts 7:3; Acts 7:4; Acts 7:7; Acts 8:7; Acts 10:23; Acts 11:25; Acts 12:9; Acts 12:10; Acts 12:17; Acts 14:20; Acts 15:40; Acts 16:3; Acts 16:10; Acts 16:13; Acts 16:18; Acts 16:19; Acts 16:36; Acts 16:40; Acts 17:33; Acts 18:23; Acts 20:1; Acts 20:11; Acts 21:5; Acts 21:8; Acts 22:18; Acts 28:3

**Took him and circumcised him** (see study of circumcision) - Paul **circumcised** Timothy for anyone could perform this rite. The Jerusalem council had declared that circumcision was not necessary for salvation or for acceptance into the Christian church. In Acts 15:1+ the "Judaizers" felt circumcision was necessary, but subsequently the Jerusalem council concluded it was not necessary for salvation. However because of Timothy's Jewish background it seemed expedient in his case in order to enlarge his local usefulness even as Paul declared in his letter to Corinth...

To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; **I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some.** And I do all things for the sake of the gospel, that I may become a fellow partaker of it. (1 Cor 9:22-23)

**Circumcised** (4059)(**peritemno** from **perí** = around + **témno** = cut off - see study of **peritome**) means literally to cut something off or away ("to cut off around"), signifying a removal of that which has been cut away. In Col 2:11 Paul is using the well known procedure of circumcision not to describe the **physical** act but to describe **spiritual** circumcision ("**without hands**") that is wrought by the Spirit and results in spiritual rebirth. Paul used the concept of **circumcision** similarly in Romans 2:24-29, addressing the Jews who had the Law and physical circumcision and yet transgressed the Law, because they were not spiritually circumcised.

To reiterate, nowhere does Luke state that Paul circumcised Timothy in order to be saved, but simply because of the Jews who were in those parts. It is a wise spiritual leader who knows how and when to apply the principles of the Word of God, when to stand firm and when to yield.

**NET Note** - Paul's cultural sensitivity showed in his action here. He did not want Timothy's lack of circumcision to become an issue (1 Cor 9:15-23).

In the case of Gentile Titus, Paul insisted that he not be circumcised because the Judaizers insisted on circumcision as necessary for salvation, a false doctrine to which Paul would not acquiesce. Paul writes...

But not even Titus who was with me, though he was a Greek, was compelled to be circumcised. But it was because of the false brethren who had sneaked in to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, in order to bring us into bondage. But we did not yield in subjection to them for even an hour, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you. (Galatians 2:3-5-note).

**John MacArthur** explains that "Circumcision was the sine qua non of Judaism. Had Timothy not been circumcised, the Jews would have assumed he was renouncing his Jewish heritage and choosing to live as a Gentile. Paul's circumcision of Timothy had nothing to do with salvation; he did it for expediency's sake, to avoid placing an unnecessary stumbling block in the way of Jewish evangelism. Timothy's circumcision granted him full access to the synagogues he would visit with Paul and Silas... From Paul's actions concerning his two companions an important principle becomes evident. Missionaries must be sensitive to the unique characteristics of the cultures in which they work. As Paul did in circumcising Timothy, they should avoid giving any unnecessary offense. But like Paul in refusing to circumcise Titus, they must not compromise any of the timeless truths of Scripture."([MacArthur, J: Acts 1-12; Acts 13-28 Moody Press](#))

**David Jeremiah** wrote, "Paul didn't flaunt his liberty in the face of those who were bound by the law. He was sensitive and humble, knowing that unsaved people were without spiritual understanding. So he extended as much grace as possible to them—an example being, asking Timothy to be circumcised for the sake of the Gospel."

**John Phillips** adds that "Paul decided that in Timothy's case, because much of his work would be among unsaved Jews, it would be best to legitimize his status by making him wholly a Jew. The Gentiles would accept a missionary who was wholly Jewish much more readily than the Jews would accept a missionary who was half Gentile. Paul put the matter to Timothy, who displayed his mettle by agreeing to the unpleasant operation. If Timothy had been wholly Gentile (as Titus was), Paul would certainly not have taken this step. But Paul was the most conciliatory of men, always willing to make concessions where it did not violate some important and vital truth." (Exploring Acts)

**Bruce** - By Jewish law Timothy was a Jew, because he was the son of Jewish mother, but because he was uncircumcised he was technically an apostate Jew. If Paul wished to maintain his links with the synagogue, he could not be seen to countenance apostasy. (NICNT)

**Longenecker** - "As Paul saw it, being a good Christian did not mean being a bad Jew." (EBC)

**Because of the Jews who were in those parts** - This primarily refers to unbelieving Jews.

**Robertson** writes "Paul voluntarily removed this stumbling-block to the ministry of Timothy. Otherwise Timothy could not have been allowed to preach in the synagogues. *Idem non est semper idem*. But Timothy's case was not the case of Titus. Here it was a question of efficient service, not an essential of salvation. Hovey notes that Timothy was circumcised because of Jewish unbelievers, not because of Jewish believers."

**Jews** ([2453](#)) (**loudaios**) ultimately derived from Hebrew Yehudi = a member of the tribe of Judah) is an adjective refers to one who belongs to the Jewish race with focus on adherence to Mosaic tradition (Acts 10:28, 22:3, 21:39). A Jew in respect to race or religion (as opposed to Gentiles). In the plural, it means the Jews, the people of ancient Palestine. In John's Gospel loudaios was used of those hostile to Jesus, especially the Jewish leaders (Jn 2:18, 5:16ff, 6:41, 7:1, 10:31ff, 19:7). Jesus is referred to as **King of the Jews** (Mt 2:2, Mt 27:11, Mk 15:2, Lk 23:3, Jn 18:33). Jews hated the Samaritans (Jn 4:9) and the missionary activity of Paul (Acts 9:23, 13:45, 14:19, 20:3, 21:27, 23:12, 25:7). Paul qualified the meaning of **loudaios** in light of the New Covenant in his discourse on Romans 2, explaining that there are "Jews" and then there are "real Jews." In so doing he did not say that Jews or Israel ceased to exist, nor that the promises first given to Israel and the Jews would now be transferred to the Church. Read Ro 2:28-[note](#).

**For (gar)** - Term of explanation. Luke is explaining why Timothy was circumcised.

**NET Note** - Under Jewish law at least as early as the 2nd century, a person was considered Jewish if his or her mother was Jewish. It is not certain whether such a law was in effect in the 1st century, but even if it was, Timothy would not have been accepted as fully Jewish because he was not circumcised.

**They all knew that his father was a Greek** - **They** refers to **the Jews who were in those parts**. As the **NET Note** explains "Under Jewish law at least as early as the 2nd century, a person was considered Jewish if his or her mother was Jewish. It is not certain whether such a law was in effect in the 1st century, but even if it was, Timothy would not have been accepted as fully Jewish because he was not circumcised."

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## **The Decision to Circumcise” - Allen Ross**

Acts 16 begins with Paul’s meeting the young Timothy. He was a disciple of Jesus and apparently well thought of in that region. We also learn that his mother was a Jewish believer in Jesus, but his father was a Greek.

Here, then, Paul immediately met with a situation that the council had tried to address. Timothy had been brought up in a home with a Gentile father and a Jewish believing mother. He had not been circumcised. They saw no need for it. And indeed, the results of the Jerusalem council would have confirmed that conclusion, namely, that to become a believer in Jesus, a member of the New Covenant, he did not have to go back and fulfill the regulations of the law.

But Paul circumcised Timothy “because of the Jews who lived in that area” (v. 3). Paul was going from city to city delivering the decisions reached by the council for the people to obey, and he wanted to take Timothy along. The council had not ruled on circumcision, specifically, but in theory it did. It had ruled that while Gentiles did not have to go under the law in order to become “Christians,” they should conform to certain laws so that they would not offend the Jews. And this seems to be what Paul was doing here.

Paul knew that it was not necessary for Timothy to be circumcised for theological reasons. This is the main issue he discusses in Romans 2:17-29. True circumcision is of the heart, that is, by the Spirit. There he reasons that someone who has not been circumcised but who keeps the law’s requirements will be regarded as if he had been circumcised. So to Paul the real issue was faith in Christ. The true believer was circumcised in heart by the Spirit and would therefore begin to live righteously--what the law had been designed to produce.

But Paul thought it was necessary for Timothy to be circumcised under the circumstances. He could tell these assemblies what the council had decided, but he could also explain that in the spirit of love and understanding Timothy got circumcised anyway so that the Jews would not be offended. This demonstration of the law of love worked very well as the churches responded well to it. And, we know that Timothy grew in the faith to be a leader in the church.

There is a settlement in Israel called Yad Hashmoneh, a substantial number of Jewish believers who live not far from Jerusalem. They are very interesting to see because they are trying to live as biblical Christians without all the trappings of Judaism that are not mentioned in the Bible (prayer shawls, little caps, etc.). But they say that the Israelis who live all around them, who are their friends, always ask them if they eat pork, if they circumcise, and if they keep sabbath. They know that if they ate pork, or did not circumcise, or broke sabbath, they would lose all contact with their neighbors who would have nothing to do with them. In fact, one year when our students were staying at the “moshav” as it is called, they had a circumcision service and invited in all the folks they knew. The contact allowed them to show that their faith in Christ Jesus was not a repudiation of their Jewishness, but a continuation of it to fulfillment in the Jewish Messiah. Here is a modern illustration of what surely was in the mind of Paul when he made the decision to have Timothy circumcised.

The principle applies to all of us as well. In Christ Jesus we have certain freedoms. But often we come across new or young believers who are not sure that Christians should be doing certain things, such as eating pork, or doing certain things on what are known as holy days, or a number of other issues. The mature Christian is called on to exercise the law of love, to abstain from some freedoms while those they know are growing in the faith. Likewise, in ministries in other cultures there are things that the mature Christian must give up if there is to be any witness at all. Here is where wisdom and love govern the use of freedoms in Christ.

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**Norman Geisler** - Acts 16:1–3—Why did Paul have Timothy circumcised when he himself spoke so strongly against it?

**PROBLEM:** Paul’s main point in Galatians can be summarized in his words, “If you become circumcised, Christ will profit you nothing” (Gal. 5:2). Yet Paul admits that he had Timothy circumcised “because of the Jews who were in that region” (Acts 16:3). Wasn’t this a contradiction to his own teaching.

**SOLUTION:** Even if Paul were wrong here in his action, it would not prove that the Bible erred in its teaching, but simply that Paul erred. Paul, like any other human being, was capable of error. Since the Bible is the Word of God (see Introduction), it is not capable of erring in anything it teaches.

Furthermore, Paul’s action in having Timothy circumcised is not necessarily inconsistent with what he taught in Galatians, since the two cases are different. Paul was violently opposed to any who made circumcision necessary for salvation. But he never opposed it as helpful for evangelism. Indeed, Paul said elsewhere, “to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews” (1 Cor. 9:20). However, when Judaizers insisted that “unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1), then Paul took an intractable stand against circumcision. (When Critics Ask)

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## **Walter Kaiser - Why Did Paul Circumcise Timothy?**

Inconsistency confuses us, and arguing for one point of view and then turning around and acting contrary to that point of view appears inconsistent. Of course, we sometimes misunderstand the actions of others, and an inner consistency can exist behind apparently contradictory deeds. Yet when we see truly inconsistent actions we at best call the doer fickle, at worst hypocritical, even deceiving. This is the issue that appears to face us in Acts 16:3. No sooner does Acts report the Jerusalem council’s decision that it is not necessary for one to be circumcised or keep the Mosaic law to be saved (Acts 15) than it mentions Paul’s circumcising

Timothy in order to take him along as a coworker. Doesn't this contradict Paul's principles in Acts 15? And doesn't Galatians 2:3 state, "Yet not even Titus, who was with me, was compelled to be circumcised, even though he was a Greek"? How could the Paul who in Galatians 2:5 writes, "We did not give in to [those who wanted to circumcise Titus] for a moment, so that the truth of the gospel might remain with you," have Timothy circumcised? Was Paul himself two-faced, or is one of the accounts historically inaccurate?

The resolution of this issue turns on a very important point. In Jewish eyes Titus was clearly a Gentile, for his parentage was Gentile, but Timothy was considered a Jew, because his mother was a Jew. The Mishnah, the Jewish legal tradition, makes it clear that children of Jewish mothers are really Jews, regardless of the race of their fathers. Acts states that Timothy's father was a Gentile. It is also clear from the verb tense used that his father was dead by the time Paul selected Timothy as a coworker. Timothy's mother and grandmother (according to 2 Tim 1:5) were Jews, which fits with what we know about the laxity in the Jewish community in Asia Minor, for allowing a Jewish woman to marry a Gentile was not orthodox Jewish practice. Paul presumably converted the family during his first missionary journey, but even before that Timothy was probably steeped in Scripture and observed the religion of his mother, although she may have practiced it in secret. When his father died and what his father had felt about his religious practice is not known. He may have been a God-fearer, on the fringes of the synagogue. But neither the father himself nor his son had been circumcised. The father had not allowed his son to be fully Jewish (circumcision in the days of public baths was a public mark that would have identified Timothy as a member of a different race, the Jews).

Normally, Paul's missionary practice was to go to the local synagogue first. How could he do so with Timothy, who would have been viewed as a type of renegade Jew? And how could Timothy participate fully in the mission while being only half-Jew? With Titus a principle was involved: Gentiles do not need to become Jews. But with Timothy the question was whether a half-Jew could or should fully actualize his Jewish heritage. Paul's decision is to regularize Timothy's status, perhaps to facilitate mission ("To the Jews I became like a Jew, to win the Jews," 1 Cor 9:20) or perhaps to allay suspicions ("They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs," Acts 21:21). For Paul, Gentiles had no need to become Jews to improve their spiritual status, but it was not wrong for a Jew to live his Jewish culture to the fullest.

It might have appeared more consistent if Paul had not taken this step, especially in light of the issues discussed in Galatians and the fact that Timothy lived in the Galatian area. Some have suggested that troubles stemming from this action led to the writing of Galatians and the citing of the counterexample of Titus. However, it is more likely that Galatians was written before the second missionary journey and that this incident clarified Paul's stance. When seen as a cultural rather than a religious issue, circumcision was an indifferent practice. Where it could be used for the advantage of the gospel, it was good. Where it hindered the gospel, it was to be avoided. In no case did it make the person more or less spiritual. Analogous cultural practices can be found today. Likewise today slavish consistency may hinder mission, while apparent inconsistency may point to a deeper underlying consistency and meet the requirements of a nuanced cultural situation. Until this is understood, it is unwise to criticize the apparent surface vacillation. (Hard Sayings of the Bible)

#### Related Resources:

- [What does the Bible say about circumcision? What is the Christian view of circumcision?](#)
- [What is the difference between the ceremonial law, the moral law, and the judicial law in the Old Testament?](#)
- [Do Christians have to obey the Old Testament law?](#)

**Acts 16:4 Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe.**

KJV 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.

NET Acts 16:4 As they went through the towns, they passed on the decrees that had been decided on by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the Gentile believers to obey.

GNT Acts 16:4 ς δ̅ διεπορευοντο τς πλεις, παρεδ̅δ̅σαν ατο ς φυλσσειν τ̅ δ̅ γματ̅α τ̅ κερ̅ιμνα π̅ τ̅ ν̅ ποστλων κα̅ πρεσβυτων τ̅ ν̅ εροσολμοις.

NLT Acts 16:4 Then they went from town to town, instructing the believers to follow the decisions made by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem.

ESV Acts 16:4 As they went on their way through the cities, they delivered to them for observance the decisions that had been reached by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem.

CSB Acts 16:4 As they traveled through the towns, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and



elders at Jerusalem for them to observe.

NIV Acts 16:4 As they traveled from town to town, they delivered the decisions reached by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for the people to obey.

- **they delivering**: Acts 15:6,28,29
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **DELIVERING THE DECREES FROM THE JERUSALEM COUNCIL**

**Now while they were passing through the cities** - This would imply all of the cities they had visited on their first missionary journey for in Acts 15:36+ Luke records that "After some days Paul said to Barnabas, "Let us return and visit the brethren **in every city in which we proclaimed the word of the Lord**, and see how they are."" These cities would also include those that had churches in "**Syria and Cilicia**." (Acts 15:41+).

**Delivering the decrees** - What **decrees**? The **decrees** which had been drawn up by the apostles and elders at Jerusalem which can be summarized that salvation is by faith alone (God cleansed the Gentiles "hearts by faith." Acts 15:9+) and does **NOT** require circumcision or law-keeping, that sexual immorality was forbidden for all believers for all time and that meats offered to idols, from animals that had been strangled, and blood were all forbidden as food, not as matters essential to salvation, but to facilitate fellowship between Jewish and Gentile believers. Some of these instructions were revised (1 Cor. 8-10; 1 Ti 4:4, 5).

MacArthur summarizes their goal of giving "the twofold message of Christianity: salvation by grace and living by love." (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Acts)

**Toussaint** writes "Assuming Paul wrote Galatians after the first missionary journey, but before the Jerusalem Council, the report of the decision would be strong confirmation of the gospel which he preached and about which he wrote." (The Bible Knowledge Commentary)

**Delivering** (entrusting, handing over) ([3860](#))([paradidomi](#) from **para** = alongside, beside, to the side of, over to + **didomi** = to give) conveys the basic meaning of to give over from one's hand to someone or something, especially to give over to the power of another. This could be phrased "they handed down to them the decisions to observe." **Delivering** is in the [imperfect tense](#) which pictures the missionaries as "handing them over" the decrees over and over to those they met along the way.

**Decrees** ([1378](#))([dogma](#) from **dokéo** = to think) refers to a fixed and authoritative decision or requirement (see the "decree" [dogma] of the emperors in Lu 2:1, Acts 17:7), the requirements of the Mosaic law (Col. 2:14), and in this context of the regulations or conclusions of the Jerusalem Conference.

**Which had been decided** ([krino](#)) **upon** - **Decided** is [krino](#), the same verb used by James the head of the Jerusalem council who declared "it is my **judgment** ([krino](#)) that we do not trouble those who are turning to God from among the Gentiles." (Acts 15:19+) Lydia uses [krino](#) in Acts 16:15.

All **Luke's** uses of **krino** in **Acts** -

Acts 3:13; Acts 4:19; Acts 7:7; Acts 13:27; Acts 13:46; Acts 15:19; Acts 16:4; Acts 16:15; Acts 17:31; Acts 20:16; Acts 21:25; Acts 23:3; Acts 23:6; Acts 24:6; Acts 24:21; Acts 25:9; Acts 25:10; Acts 25:20; Acts 25:25; Acts 26:6; Acts 26:8; Acts 27:1;

**By the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem** - Although it was James who made the declaration of the decree, the leadership was in unanimous agreement, Luke recording that

"The **apostles and the elders** came together to look into this matter..." "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us to lay upon you no greater burden than these essentials: that you abstain from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled and from fornication; if you keep yourselves free from such things, you will do well. Farewell." (Acts 15:6+, Acts 15:28-29+)

**For them to observe** - In this context the directive from the Jerusalem Council to the Gentiles to **observe** or obey the decrees was not a legalistic demand, but a decree based upon grace and empowered by the Spirit. Remember that grace is not the freedom to do as you wish, but the power to obey as you should and thereby be pleasing to your heavenly Father.

Note the [present tense](#) calls for these decrees "for liberty" (Robertson) were to be their lifestyle, their continual practice, not just a temporary compromise.

**Observe** (to keep or obey) (5442) (**phulasso** from **phulake** = a military guard - gives good picture of what is required) means to preserve by "having an eye on," to watch, to carry out the function as a military guard or sentinel (cp Acts 23:35, 28:16), to have one's eye upon lest one escape, to guard a person that he might remain safe (from violence, from another person or thing, from being snatched away, from being lost). Phulasso is used of the constant vigilance displayed by shepherds in keeping their flocks (see Lk 2:8+, used with phulake "a military guard" exercising unbroken vigilance; "vigilantly keep." The NT uses phulasso of guarding truth (eg, 1Ti 5:21, 6:20, 2 Ti 1:14±) Elsewhere we read of the Good Shepherd, the Great Shepherd Who keeps watch over His sheep (cf 2 Ti 1:12).

**Phulasso** in Luke -

Lk. 2:8; Lk. 8:29; Lk. 11:21; Lk. 11:28; Lk. 12:15; Lk. 18:21; Jn. 12:25; Jn. 12:47; Jn. 17:12; Acts 7:53; Acts 12:4; Acts 16:4; Acts 21:24; Acts 21:25; Acts 22:20; Acts 23:35; Acts 28:16;

**Acts 16:5 So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.**

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

NET Acts 16:5 So the churches were being strengthened in the faith and were increasing in number every day.

GNT Acts 16:5 α μ ν ο ν κ κ λ η σ α ι σ τ ε ρ ο υ ν τ ο τ π σ τ ε ι κ α π ε ρ σ σ ε υ ο ν τ ρ ι θ μ καθ μ ρ αν.

NLT Acts 16:5 So the churches were strengthened in their faith and grew larger every day.

ESV Acts 16:5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith, and they increased in numbers daily.

CSB Acts 16:5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily.

NIV Acts 16:5 So the churches were strengthened in the faith and grew daily in numbers.

YLT Acts 16:5 then, indeed, were the assemblies established in the faith, and were abounding in number every day;

- **so** : Acts 15:41 2Ch 20:20 Isa 7:9 Ro 16:25 1Co 15:58 Ga 5:1 Eph 4:13-16 Col 2:6 1Th 3:2,13 2Th 2:16 Heb 13:9,20,21 1Pe 5:10
- **increasing**: Acts 2:47 Acts 4:4 Acts 5:14 Acts 6:7 Acts 9:31 Acts 11:21 Acts 12:24 Acts 13:48,49 Acts 19:18-21
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## HOLY ARITHMETIC ANOTHER SUMMARY

**So** (oun) - Term of conclusion which in this context is used to introduce a logical conclusion, "from that fact, reason, or as a result." The **decrees** were based on the Word of truth and when followed resulted in strengthening of their faith (cf Ro 10:17+).

Compare with Luke's other summary statements or "progress reports" - Acts 2:41, 47, 4:4, 5:14, 6:7; 9:31; 12:24; 19:20; 28:31

**The churches were being strengthened in the faith** - Note that Luke says it was **the churches** that were strengthened not just individual members. The individual members are pictured as part of the whole body. The church is not an organization but a living organism, Christ's body, composed of individual members (believers) joined together and in and through which Christ, the Head works, carries out His purposes and lives. This picture is another reason believers should not forsake their assembling together, for they will miss out on vital body dynamics which Christ communicates to His body as a whole. It was a crucial time in the history of the early church as it now began to shift from predominantly Jewish to predominantly Gentile.

**MacArthur** makes the point that "The goal of evangelism is not to rack up huge numbers of converts. Yet it is true that strong churches, established in the faith, will increase in numbers." (Ibid)

**Churches** (1577) (**ekklesia** from **ek** = out + **klesis** = a calling, verb = **kaleo** = to call) literally means called out and as commonly used in the Greco-Roman vernacular referred to citizens who were *called out* from their homes to be publicly assembled or gathered to discuss or carry out affairs of state. **Wuest** writes that "The word **assembly** is a good one-word translation of **ekklesia**."

**Being strengthened** (imperfect) (4732) (**stereo** from **stereos** = solid, stable) means literally to make strong, stable, firm (only 2 other NT uses = Acts 3:7+ and Acts 3:16+). In Acts 16:5 stereo is used figuratively to solidify, confirm or establish in the faith (cf see

note 1 Th 3:2 - sterizo) The [passive voice](#) in this context would be the "[divine passive](#)," the effect of being strengthened being as a result of the the Holy Spirit and the Holy Word (cf Jn 6:63), in this context including the decrees announced and explained by the missionaries.

**Friberg** - make strong, firm, hard; literally, of physical strength make strong, strengthen (Acts 3.16); passive become firm or strong (Acts 3.7); figuratively, of firm beliefs and attitudes be strengthened (Acts 16.5) (Analytical Greek Lexicon)

**Vincent on were strengthened, stereoo** - Another word [episterizo](#) is used for **established** in Acts 14:22 ; Acts 15:32, 41; 18:23. There is a difference, moreover, between being strengthened and established. See 1 Pet. 5:10-[note](#).

**BDAG** - 1.to render physically firm, make strong, make firm. lit., of impotent limbs, pass. be strengthened, become strong 2. to cause to become firmer in such matters as conviction or commitment, strengthen, 2. to cause to become firmer in such matters as conviction or commitment, strengthen,

The other two uses of **stereoo**

Acts 3:7 And seizing him by the right hand, he raised him up; and immediately his feet and his ankles were **strengthened**.

Acts 3:16 "And on the basis of faith in His name, it is the name of Jesus which has**strengthened** this man whom you see and know; and the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect health in the presence of you all.

**Stereoo** is used 34x in the Septuagint - Note the many of the uses of stereoo refer to the Lord God establishing various aspects of creation - heavens, earth - 1 Sam. 2:1 (LXE = My heart is **established** in the Lord); 1 Sa 6:18; Job 37:18; Ps. 18:17; Ps. 33:6 (LXE = "By the word of the Lord the heavens **were established**"); Ps. 75:3 (LXE = I have strengthened its pillars.); Ps. 93:1 (NAS = the world is firmly **established**); Ps. 136:6 (LXE = To him who established the earth on the waters); Isa. 42:5 (NAS = Who spread [stereoo - settled] out the earth); Isa. 44:24; Isa. 45:12 (LXE = with my hand have established the heaven); Isa. 48:13; Isa. 51:6; Jer. 5:3; Jer. 10:4; Jer. 52:6; Lam. 2:4; Ezek. 4:7; Dan. 8:24; Hos. 13:4; Amos 4:13;

**Gilbrant on stereoo** - Classical Greek and Septuagint Usage - In classical Greek this verb means literally "to confine, contract," or metaphorically "to be in difficulty" (Liddell-Scott). It also includes the meanings of "hard, obstinate, firm, true, healthy, ripe (as grain)." The New Testament use of the term was strongly influenced by [stereoma](#), a noun related to the verb **stereoō**; the noun is used to translate "firmament" in the Septuagint creation account in Genesis 1. The ancients thought of the firmament as an inverted bowl, solid and strong. (See Bertram, "stereos," Kittel, 7:609f.) In this context the Old Testament writers pictured the heavens as an impregnable fortress, a safe retreat. It is here that God dwells, and all who dwell with Him enjoy perfect safety and security. The verb stereoō then logically conveyed the meaning "to establish" or "to make strong." The Septuagint translators of the Psalms used stereoō in two contexts: by the Lord the heavens were "made" (Ps 33:6), and by the Lord of majesty "the world also is established" so "it cannot be moved" (Ps 93:1). (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

**The faith** speaking of the Christian profession, the faith professed.

**Faith** (4102)([pistis](#)) is synonymous with trust or belief and is the conviction of the truth of anything, but in Scripture usually speaks of belief respecting man's relationship to God and divine things, generally with the included idea of trust and holy fervor born of faith and joined with it.

**Increasing** (imperfect)(4052) ([perisseuo](#) from [perissós](#) = abundant) were superabounding, even overflow, experiencing (spiritual) affluence. They were increasing in abundance with the implication of being considerably more than what would be expected.

**Perisseuo** carries the idea of exceeding the requirements, of overflowing or overdoing. It means to exceed a fixed number of measure, to be left over and above a certain number or measure. It means to have or to be more than enough, to be extremely rich or abundant. To exceed or remain over (as used in loaves left over after feeding the 5000 [Mt 14:20]! When Jesus supplies there is more than enough so that some is even left over! How quick we are to forget this basic principle!) The idea is to overflow like a river out of its banks!

**Perisseuo** is used 3 times in Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians and in two instances is translated "excel" (see notes ) referring not so much to growth in numbers but in their walk of faith (1 Th 3:12+, 1 Th 4:1+, 1 Th 4:10+)

**Number** (706)([arithmos](#); English [arithmetic](#)) refers to an identification of quantity and so a cardinal number. It can also have the sense of a numerical total.

**Liddell-Scott** - number, Lat. numerus, 2. amount, sum, extent, a sum of money, Xen. 3. as mark of station, worth, rank, among men, have no account made of them, Eur.; you come not into my account, Id. 4. mere number, quantity, opp. to quality, worth, a

mere set of words, Soph.; so of men, not a mere lot, Eur.; so alone, like Horace's nos numerus sumus, Ar. II. a numbering, counting, - to hold a muster of the army, Hdt.; Xen. III. the science of numbers, numeration, arithmetic, Aesch., Plat.

**Gilbrant** - In classical Greek **arithmos**, "number, sum," connotes both a quantity (i.e., the "third" book) and a quality (he was "first" in his class). Military rank was expressed in terms of number. To have arithmos was a mark of station; to be without it was to be "nothing" (cf. 1 Corinthians 1:28). Besides the simple numerical importance of numbers, various philosophical and religious movements in the Greek world constructed complicated systems of so-called geometry (e.g., Pythagoras) which tried to explain the world in terms of numbers. This led to numerology which assigned symbolic meanings to numbers (letters were numbers in the ancient world; a = 1, b = 2, r = 100, etc.). As a result of the Septuagint, the Hebrew numerical symbolism of the Old Testament—especially such "sacred" numbers as 3, 7, or 12—coalesced with the Greek views which had infiltrated Diaspora Judaism. Jewish cabalism is noted for picking up on this. The prevailing background of arithmos in the New Testament is the Old Testament. Vestiges of this relationship are evident in the numeric symbolism in the Book of Revelation and even in the Gospels. For example, some interpret the number 153 in John 21:11 symbolically (e.g., Jerome and Augustine). However, as Hemer notes, "John elsewhere gives precise numbers where it would be superfluous to look for a symbolic meaning (46 in 2:20; 38 in 5:5)" ("Number," Colin Brown, 2:685). The only certain example of numerology in the Scripture is the cryptic message about the name of the beast in Revelation 13:17,18. Because letters also had a numerical value, it was quite common to total the value of the letters in a particular name. By giving this sum to the initiated one, he would know which person was being referred to. ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

**Arithmos** - 18x in 15v - group(1), number(17).

Lk. 22:3; Jn. 6:10; Acts 4:4; Acts 5:36; Acts 6:7; Acts 11:21; Acts 16:5; Rom. 9:27; Rev. 5:11; Rev. 7:4; Rev. 9:16; Rev. 13:17; Rev. 13:18; Rev. 15:2; Rev. 20:8

**Arithmos** in the **Septuagint** -

Gen. 34:30; Gen. 41:49; Exod. 12:4; Exod. 16:16; Exod. 23:26; Lev. 25:15; Lev. 25:16; Lev. 27:32; Num. 1:2; Num. 1:18; Num. 1:20; Num. 1:22; Num. 1:24; Num. 1:26; Num. 1:28; Num. 1:30; Num. 1:32; Num. 1:34; Num. 1:36; Num. 1:38; Num. 1:40; Num. 1:42; Num. 1:49; Num. 3:22; Num. 3:28; Num. 3:34; Num. 3:40; Num. 3:43; Num. 9:20; Num. 14:34; Num. 15:12; Num. 26:53; Num. 29:18; Num. 29:21; Num. 29:24; Num. 29:27; Num. 29:30; Num. 29:33; Num. 29:37; Num. 31:36; Deut. 4:27; Deut. 25:2; Deut. 26:5; Deut. 28:62; Deut. 32:8; Deut. 33:6; Jos. 4:5; Jdg. 6:5; Jdg. 7:6; Jdg. 7:12; Jdg. 11:33; Jdg. 21:23; 1 Sam. 6:4; 1 Sam. 6:18; 1 Sam. 27:7; 2 Sam. 2:15; 2 Sam. 21:20; 2 Sam. 24:2; 2 Sam. 24:9; 1 Ki. 7:3; 1 Ki. 18:31; 1 Chr. 7:2; 1 Chr. 7:5; 1 Chr. 7:7; 1 Chr. 7:9; 1 Chr. 7:40; 1 Chr. 9:28; 1 Chr. 11:11; 1 Chr. 16:19; 1 Chr. 21:2; 1 Chr. 21:5; 1 Chr. 22:4; 1 Chr. 22:16; 1 Chr. 23:3; 1 Chr. 23:24; 1 Chr. 23:27; 1 Chr. 23:31; 1 Chr. 25:1; 1 Chr. 25:7; 1 Chr. 27:1; 1 Chr. 27:23; 1 Chr. 27:24; 2 Chr. 2:17; 2 Chr. 12:3; 2 Chr. 17:14; 2 Chr. 26:11; 2 Chr. 26:12; 2 Chr. 29:32; 2 Chr. 35:7; Ezr. 1:9; Ezr. 2:2; Ezr. 3:4; Ezr. 6:17; Ezr. 8:34; Est. 9:11; Job 1:5; Job 5:9; Job 9:10; Job 21:21; Job 34:24; Job 36:26; Job 38:21; Ps. 39:4; Ps. 40:5; Ps. 40:12; Ps. 104:25; Ps. 105:12; Ps. 105:34; Ps. 147:5; Eccl. 2:3; Eccl. 5:18; Eccl. 6:12; Cant. 6:8; Isa. 2:7; Isa. 10:19; Isa. 34:2; Isa. 34:16; Isa. 40:26; Jer. 2:28; Jer. 2:32; Jer. 11:13; Jer. 44:28; Jer. 46:23; Ezek. 4:4; Ezek. 4:5; Ezek. 4:9; Ezek. 5:3; Ezek. 12:16; Ezek. 20:37; Dan. 9:2; Hos. 1:10;

Here are couple of uses of **arithmos to meditate upon** to saturate and satisfy your heart and soul and mind and strength (Mk 12:30)...

Ps 40:5 Many, O LORD my God, are the wonders which You have done, And Your thoughts toward us; There is none to compare with You. If I would declare and speak of them, They would be too numerous to **count** (Lxx arithmos - "they exceeded number").

Ps 147:5 Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; His understanding is **infinite** (Lxx = "ouk estin arithmos" = "absolutely cannot be given a number").

The result was fruit from the witness of the believers so that the churches increased in number daily ("divine mathematics"). We see a similar principle in Acts 2...

(The church was) praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord was **adding to** their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:47).

**THOUGHT** - Strong (Biblically sound) churches will naturally increase in number daily, without relying on carnal, seeker oriented or manipulative ways. Sound expository preaching that matures believers in solid food (Heb 5:14+) will build a strong church and God will add His people to an edifying, equipping body of believers.

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## Acts 16:1-5

AS a teenager, J. Stephen Conn sensed God calling him to be a preacher. But he felt a certain disadvantage. Because he had been saved when he was seven years old, he would never be able to entertain audiences with stories of a wicked past. So he asked God for permission to get some experience in a life of sin to enhance his preaching later on. Deep within, he knew God would not answer such a request, so he decided just to preach the Bible without a dramatic testimony. Some time later Conn wrote, "For the past eleven years I've been pastoring a church. I realize now what a great testimony I really have. God not only has the power to deliver from sin, He has the even greater power to keep from sin.... God not only saved my soul—He saved my entire life!"

We know little about Timothy's early life except that his God-fearing mother and grandmother faithfully instructed him in the Scriptures (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:15). Because of this, he might be called a "good" sinner. Yet God used him as an effective leader in the early church. Those who have been spared a life of sin can thank God for His grace. Their lives and testimonies can be just as effective as those of the worst sinners. All sinners, good and bad, can speak of God's matchless grace.—DJD ([Our Daily Bread](#), Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved)

Lord, so often I fail to appreciate the beauty of Your goodness until after I have seen it desecrated. May I believe that Your way is right without having to learn it the hard way—without trying some other way and suffering the painful consequences.

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## TODAY IN THE WORD Acts 16:1-5

But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. - Philippians 2:22

The first seven chapters of Proverbs are believed to have been written by King David for his son Solomon. David was about to hand over the kingdom to his son, and he wanted to take the opportunity to share wise advice and counsel, exhorting his son to pursue wisdom and to live righteously.

This month we will study the books of 1 and 2 Timothy, letters written by the apostle Paul to his spiritual son, Timothy. In a similar way to Proverbs 1-7, Paul wants to pass along wise advice, helping to prepare Timothy for the ministry that he had been given.

**It's likely that Timothy became a believer when Paul first passed through Timothy's hometown of Lystra on his first missionary journey (cf. Acts. 14:8-20), meaning that Paul was Timothy's spiritual father since he introduced Timothy to Christ. Although Timothy and his mother were believers, his father was not (Acts 16:1). Paul was a Christian mentor, entrusting ministry responsibilities to Timothy and viewing him as the successor to his own legacy of ministry. Paul and Timothy exemplified a father-son relationship through Christ that still provides a model for believers today.**

Understanding this relationship provides the lens through which we can read and understand Paul's letter. First Timothy provides important and urgent instruction for the church, but it isn't a formal church document. Rather, it's a personal letter meant to cheer, instruct, and strengthen a young pastor-missionary. Although Timothy was certainly a man held in high esteem both by Paul and the churches in which they had ministered together (Acts 16:2-3), he was altogether "ordinary," just as we are. Young and timid, he needed Paul's encouragement (cf. 2 Tim. 1:7). Raised by an unbelieving father, he didn't have the perfect Christian heritage we might expect. We learn how God often delights to work powerfully through the most unlikely candidates.

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## Acts 16:1-5, 2 Timothy 1:5-6

My son . . . do not forsake your mother's teaching. - Proverbs 1:8

### TODAY IN THE WORD

John Wesley is renowned as a great evangelist. Charles Wesley, his brother, also preached the gospel and penned numerous hymns, including "And Can It Be" and "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing." But their significant Christian contributions should be considered in light of the influence of their mother, Susanna Wesley. Mother of 19 children, she endeavored to teach her sons and daughters Greek and Latin and instruct them in the faith. One biographer said, "John Wesley and Charles Wesley, as children consciously or unconsciously will, applied the example and teachings and circumstances of their home life."

The godly impact of parents and grandparents can be seen in the life of Timothy. This preacher and missionary was valuable in the spread of the gospel and the growth of the early church. He was dearly loved by the apostle Paul and considered indispensable in ministry (Phil. 2:22). Scripture takes care to note that Timothy inherited a rich legacy of faith that helped to prepare him for his calling.

First, Timothy chose to follow God as a young man. His father was not a believer, and his mother Eunice was (Acts 16:1). At some point prior to meeting Paul, Timothy had already decided that he would embrace the faith

of his mother, and his reputation among the believers testified to his commitment.

Second, Timothy demonstrated his faith through his obedience. To remove any distraction from their ministry, Paul circumcised his son in the faith, and Timothy complied. He left his home in Lystra to accompany Paul and Silas, and God blessed their work with new believers coming to Christ daily.

Finally, as Paul neared the end of his life, he wrote letters to Timothy to encourage and exhort him to remain faithful as a minister of the gospel. He described Timothy's "sincere faith," and noted that Timothy was blessed with a mother and a grandmother who had this faith. The previous generations had poured themselves into Timothy, and in light of their faithfulness and Timothy's calling, Paul urged him to "fan into flame the gift of God" (2 Tim. 1:6).

APPLY THE WORD If you would like to know more about [Susanna Wesley](#) and her impact on the faith of her children, her letters and commentaries have been collected in *Susanna Wesley: The Complete Writings*, which is available from bookstores or libraries. Several biographies have been written, including *Susanna Wesley* by Arnold Dallimore. Spend time in prayer today for the generation following you, and seek to model the kind of life-changing faith of Lois and Eunice through the grace of the Holy Spirit.

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**J C Philpot** - "And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily." Acts 16:5

Oh what an inestimable mercy it is for a man to know the truth for himself by divine teaching and divine testimony; to have it applied to his heart by a gracious influence and a heavenly power, so as to know for himself what salvation is, whence it comes, and above all to enjoy a sweet persuasion that this salvation has reached his heart! He will then know where to go in the hour of trouble, to whom to resort when sorrow and affliction come into his house, or illness or infirmity shake his tabernacle. He will not be a stranger to the throne of grace, nor to the sweetness of the covenant ordered in all things and sure. But there will be given him from above, out of the fullness of Christ, such grace and strength as will support him in the trying hour. It is by these gracious dealings upon his soul, that a believer becomes "established in the faith." No, the very storms through which he passes will only strengthen him to take a firmer hold of Christ, and thus become more established in the faith of him. It is in these storms that he learns more of his own weakness and of Christ's strength; more of his own misery and of Christ's mercy; more of his own sinfulness and of super-abounding grace; more of his own poverty and of Christ's riches; more of his own desert of hell, and more of his own title to heaven. Thus he becomes "established in faith," for the same blessed Spirit who began the work carries it on, goes on to fill up the original outline, and to engrave the image of Christ in deeper characters upon his heart, and to teach him more and more experimentally the truth as it is in Jesus.

**Acts 16:6 They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia;**

KJV 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,

NET Acts 16:6 They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been prevented by the Holy Spirit from speaking the message in the province of Asia.

GNT Acts 16:6 Δι λθον δ τ ν Φρυγ αν κα Γαλατικ ν χ ραν κωλυθ ντες π το γ ου πνε ματος λαλ σαι τ ν λ γον  
ν τ σ ·

NLT Acts 16:6 Next Paul and Silas traveled through the area of Phrygia and Galatia, because the Holy Spirit had prevented them from preaching the word in the province of Asia at that time.

ESV Acts 16:6 And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.

CSB Acts 16:6 They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia and were prevented by the Holy Spirit from speaking the message in Asia.

NIV Acts 16:6 Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia.

NAB Acts 16:6 They traveled through the Phrygian and Galatian territory because they had been prevented by the holy Spirit from preaching the message in the province of Asia.

NJB Acts 16:6 They travelled through Phrygia and the Galatian country, because they had been told by the

Holy Spirit not to preach the word in Asia.

GWN Acts 16:6 Paul and Silas went through the regions of Phrygia and Galatia because the Holy Spirit kept them from speaking the word in the province of Asia.

NRS Acts 16:6 They went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.

YLT Acts 16:6 and having gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia,

- **Phrygia:** Ac 2:10 18:23
- **region :** Ac 18:23 1Co 16:1 Ga 1:2 3:1 2Ti 4:10 1Pe 1:1
- **forbidden :** Ac 16:7 10:19 11:12 13:2-4 20:28 2Ch 6:7-9 Isa 30:21 Am 8:11,12 1Co 12:11 Heb 11:8
- **Asia :** Ac 19:10,26,27 20:4,16 2Co 1:8 2Ti 1:15 1Pe 1:1 Rev 1:4,11
- [Map of Second Missionary Journey](#)
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE HOLY SPIRIT "SHUTS THEIR MOUTHS"

**They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region** (Find these locations on [this map](#)) - They had been in the cities that Paul and Barnabas had visited on the first missionary journey (cf Acts 15:36+), the city furthest north being **Antioch of Pisidia** ([Antiochia Kaesareia on the map](#)), and it was presumably from this city that they trekked into neighboring region of Phrygia and Galatia.

**Passed through** (went through)([1330](#))([dierchomai](#) from **dia** = through + **erchomai** = come, go) means to go through, to pass through, to move through an area ("When they had **gone through** the whole island" = Acts 13:6; Jesus "**went about** doing good and healing" = Acts 10:38; Paul "**went about** preaching the kingdom" = Acts 20:25, cf Acts 8:4, 40, 17:23; "they began **going throughout** the villages" = Lk 9:6; Jesus "**passing through** Jericho" = Lk 19:1; Jesus "was passing between Samaria and Galilee" = Lk 17:11;

All Luke's uses of **dierchomai** -

Lk. 2:15; Lk. 2:35; Lk. 4:30; Lk. 5:15; Lk. 8:22; Lk. 9:6; Lk. 11:24; Lk. 17:11; Lk. 19:1; Lk. 19:4; Jn. 4:4; Acts 8:4; Acts 8:40; Acts 9:32; Acts 9:38; Acts 10:38; Acts 11:19; Acts 12:10; Acts 13:6; Acts 13:14; Acts 14:24; Acts 15:3; Acts 15:41; Acts 16:6; Acts 17:23; Acts 18:23; Acts 18:27; Acts 19:1; Acts 19:21; Acts 20:2; Acts 20:25;

**Phrygian...region** ([see note](#)) was a district in central Asia Minor west of Pisidia ([see location in central Turkey](#)).

**NET Note on Galatian** - "Galatia refers to either (1) the region of the old kingdom of Galatia in the central part of Asia Minor (North Galatia), or (2) the Roman province of Galatia, whose principal cities in the 1st century were Ancyra and Pisidian Antioch (South Galatia). The exact extent and meaning of this area has been a subject of considerable controversy in modern NT studies." (NET Note)

As **Kenneth Gangel** says "It is useless to ponder how the Holy Spirit conveyed this message." (Ibid)

**Having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia**- How the Holy Spirit forbade Paul, Silas and Timothy is not specifically stated. The phrase **the word** in this context indicates the Gospel. Somehow the Spirit told the missionaries not to preach the Gospel in these regions at this time. However **God had not forgotten about the lost souls in Asia** ([see "Asia" in the red area on this Map](#)) for these regions would later have churches in several cities including Ephesus, Smyrna, Philadelphia, Laodicea, Colossae, Sardis, Pergamum, and Thyatira. For now that "door" was closed to Paul. Note that by using the name **Asia** Luke was NOT referring to the continent of Asia as we know it today.

**NET Note on Asia** - "Asia"; in the NT this always refers to the Roman province of Asia, made up of about one-third of the west and southwest end of modern Asia Minor. ([see red area on this Map](#)) Asia lay to the west of the region of Phrygia and Galatia.

**Forbidden** (Hindered, prevented) ([2967](#)) (**koluo** from **kólos** = docked, lopped, clipped, **kolazo** = curtail) means to cut off, to cut short, to weaken and generally to hinder, to prevent, to check, to restrain or to forbid by word or act. The idea is to cause something not to happen. To hinder means to make slow or difficult the progress of something by interfering in some way with the activity or progress thereof. In short **koluo** means to make it difficult for someone to do something or for something to happen in this case to preach the Gospel. At times the Spirit says "NO" so He can lead us to a greater ministry for Jesus.

**THOUGHT - Forbidden** is a fascinating example of the "[divine passive](#)," which Luke clearly relates to the effect of the prohibitive effect of the Holy Spirit. One wonders how many times we experience "divine passives"? Or how many times we refuse to pay attention to the Spirit's still small voice in His "divine passives?" Oh my! Dear Father in Heaven, give us ears and hearts like young Samuel who finally recognized Your voice exclaiming "Speak Lord, your servant is listening." (1 Samuel 3:10). Amen.

**F B Meyer** - Each believer has an appointed place in the great army of God. It is indicated by the voice of God, and by the circumstances of our life; and it should be jealously retained. Repeatedly the Apostle bade his converts abide in the calling wherein they were called. Yours may be towards the bleak north of difficulty, or the warm south of privilege — in the home, the country parish, or the difficult foreign post. But, on the whole, you should stay where you are; unless the Captain of our salvation moves you by some unmistakable indication of his will. The apostle Paul ever lived in such dependence on the Holy Spirit for guidance, and for the unfolding of the Divine purpose, that from some apparently trivial circumstance he would "gather" the movements of the pillar of cloud by day, and of fire by night. And interval there was none between his apprehension of the Divine purpose and his endeavor to strike his tent and follow wherever it might lead (Acts 16:6–7). (Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily)

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### Acts 16:6-15

Come over to Macedonia and help us. - Acts 16:9

#### TODAY IN THE WORD

On February 25, 1870, Hiram Revels became the first African American to serve as a U.S. Senator. Revels spent most of his life as an itinerant preacher, and took leadership roles in politics and education. After the Civil War, Mississippi elected him to serve out the unexpired term of Confederate President Jefferson Davis. On the day of his swearing in, said one newspaper, "there was not an inch of standing or sitting room in the galleries, so densely were they packed."

On that day, Hiram Revels crossed racial boundaries and made history. In today's reading, the apostle Paul did the same, taking the gospel to Europe for the first time in recorded history. We've returned to the time of his second missionary journey, but things had not been going well. The Spirit had been blocking their path in Asia. Paul, Timothy, and Silas knew that God must have something special planned, and they expressed an attitude of expectant readiness. Then God spoke, giving Paul a vision of a man saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us" (v. 9). Luke joined them, and the group made their historic entry into Europe.

Traveling on the nearly 500-mile-long Via Egnatia between the two continents, they arrived in Philippi, one of four districts of Macedonia. There must have been fewer than ten Jewish males in the city, for there was no synagogue there. Instead, the missionaries met a group of women at a place of prayer outside the city. Lydia, a businesswoman, and her household believed and were baptized. She had been a worshiper of the true God already, and when the gospel arrived, He opened her heart to understand and respond immediately. She at once offered Paul and his friends hospitality.

Lydia's gracious response remains an instructive model for how we should practice hospitality, particularly toward those in ministry. This is not an onerous task, but something that should bring them encouragement and us great joy (see 1 Peter 4:9).

With regard to our year's theme of purpose, we can meditate on Paul's passion for evangelism, his sensitivity to the Spirit's leading, and the fact that God is always at work around and ahead of us.

#### TODAY ALONG THE WAY

You may not have been called to the same ministry as the apostle Paul, but it's clear from our reading that he had many partners in ministry with different gifts, all working together to glorify God. Perhaps, like Lydia, you can extend hospitality to missionaries who visit or to your pastor and his family through sharing a meal together. This doesn't have to be grand, stressful entertaining, but a way of meeting needs and supporting God's work.

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**Norman Geisler** - Acts 16:6—Why did the Holy Spirit forbid Paul to preach in Asia when Jesus said to go into all the world?

**PROBLEM:** Jesus commanded His followers to "make disciples of all the nations" (Matt. 28:19) and to be witnesses to "the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8). But in Acts 16 Paul and Timothy "were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia" (v. 6).

**SOLUTION:** Paul was only forbidden immediately. God had a more strategic route for the Gospel through Europe first (Acts 16:9). Eventually, however, the Gospel got to Asia and to every place through Paul's converts in Europe (cf. 1 Thes. 1:7) and by Paul himself (Acts 19:10, 22, 26; 20:4, 16, 18; 1 Cor. 16:19). So, the prohibition was only temporary, not permanent. (When Critics Ask)

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**Acts 16:7 and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them;**

KJV Acts 16:7 After they were come to Mysia, they **assayed** to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them



not.

NET Acts 16:7 When they came to Mysia, they **attempted** to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them to do this,

GNT Acts 16:7 λθ ντες δ κατ τ ν Μυσ αν **πε ραζον** ες τ ν Βιθυν αν πορευθ ναι, κα ο κ ε ασεν α το ς τ πνε μα ησο .

NLT Acts 16:7 Then coming to the borders of Mysia, they headed north for the province of Bithynia, but again the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them to go there.

ESV Acts 16:7 And when they had come up to Mysia, they **attempted** to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.

CSB Acts 16:7 When they came to Mysia, they **tried** to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them.

NIV Acts 16:7 When they came to the border of Mysia, they **tried** to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to.

NAB Acts 16:7 When they came to Mysia, they **tried** to go on into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them,

NKJ Acts 16:7 After they had come to Mysia, they **tried** to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them.

NJB Acts 16:7 When they reached the frontier of Mysia they **tried** to go into Bithynia, but as the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them,

GWN Acts 16:7 They went to the province of Mysia and **tried** to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus wouldn't allow this.

NRS Acts 16:7 When they had come opposite Mysia, they **attempted** to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them;

YLT Acts 16:7 having gone toward Mysia, they were **trying** to go on toward Bithynia, and the Spirit did not suffer them,

- [Bithynia](#): 1Pe 1:1
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## A SECOND HINDRANCE BY THE SPIRIT OF JESUS

**And after they came to Mysia** - In [northwest Asia Minor](#). They trekked through Galatia, Phrygia, Asia into the region of Mysia (before you read on, [trace their trek](#)).

**They were trying to go into Bithynia** - [Northeast of Mysia](#). **Trying** is the verb [peirazo](#) and is translated in the KJV as "they assayed." [Peirazo](#) is in the [imperfect tense](#) which pictures Paul and Silas repeatedly trying to enter Bithynia.

**Trying** (3985) ([peirazo](#) from the noun **peira** = test from **peiro** = perforate, pierce through to test durability of things) [Peirazo](#) is a morally neutral word simply = to test but whether the testing is for a good (Heb 11:17) or evil (Mt 4:1) purpose.

**THOUGHT** - "Paul was guided by hindrance. The Holy Spirit often guides as much by the closing of doors as He does by the opening of doors.iii. David Livingstone wanted to go to China, but God sent him to Africa. William Carey wanted to go to Polynesia, but God sent him to India. Adoniram Judson went to India, but God guided him to Burma. God guides us along the way, to just the right place." (Guzik)

**William Larkin** asks "How does God guide his church to the right place for mission? There will be "closed" as well as "open doors." There will be guidance addressed to individuals as well as to the entire team. There will be guidance via circumstances, sometimes extraordinary, as well as through the use of reason in evaluating circumstances in the light of God's Word. And specific guidance will come only to those who are already on the road, living out their general obedience to the Great Commission. Being able to say, "God sent me; I come with the wind at my back," is a strong witness to one's hearers that one's message is from God and true. (The IVP New Testament Commentary Series – Acts)

**J. I. Packer** wrote, "Belief that divine guidance is real rests upon two foundation-facts: first, the reality of God's plan for us; second, the ability of God to communicate with us. On both these facts the Bible has much to say."

**The Spirit of Jesus did not permit them** - Paul, presumably filled with the Spirit is responsive to the Spirit's guidance (cf Ro 8:14, Gal 5:18) and willingly lays down his will and plans. Paul is being guided by hindrance, closed doors (but the exact form of this "closure" is not stated by Luke) not opened doors. The Holy Spirit guides as much by the closing of doors as He does by the opening of doors. We all like the latter, but often chaff at the former!

Did you notice the synonymous identification of the Holy Spirit in Acts 16:6 and with Spirit of Jesus in this verse? These parallel names are a clear indication that the Holy Spirit is Deity, and supports that He is the third Person of the Trinity.

**Permit (1439)(eao)** means to allow someone to do something, to let or to permit , Here in Acts 16:7 eao is modified with the strongest Greek negative which signifies He absolutely did not permit them! In other contexts **eao** means leaving someone or something alone (Acts 5:38)

All NT uses of **eao** - Matt. 24:43; Lk. 4:41; Lk. 22:51; Acts 14:16; Acts 16:7; Acts 19:30; Acts 23:32; Acts 27:32; Acts 27:40; Acts 28:4; 1 Co. 10:13= "will not **allow** you to be tempted beyond what you are able")

Acts 16:6-7 both clearly demonstrate the superintendence and guidance of the Holy Spirit in missionary strategy.

**Charles Ryrie** writes that - Asia needed the Gospel, but this was not God's time. Need did not constitute their call. They had just come from the east; they had been forbidden to go south or north, but they did not presume that the Lord was leading them to the west --they waited His specific directions. Logic alone is not the basis for a call.

**Discerning God's Will** - move ahead and allow Him to close doors until the right opportunity presents itself. This makes me think of the great Rich Mullin's classic spiritual song "[Sometimes by Step.](#)"

The Lord's calling may become evident in different ways. One key principle is indicated here in the calling of Paul to Macedonia in Greece. Paul was already active, trying to preach in the province of Asia, then in Bithynia. He was not waiting idly at home, hoping to receive a call. The Holy Spirit in some very clear way closed the first two doors, but then opened another by this special vision. It is sobering to think that if Paul had not been redirected to Philippi and Greece, he might never have gone into Europe and Christianity might have remained primarily an Asian religion. But God had other purposes.

## Related Resources

- [Discerning the Will Of God](#)
- [How can I be sure I am praying according to the will of God?](#)
- [What are the biblical principles for solid decision-making?](#)
- [How can I know if the desires of my heart are from God?](#)
- [What does the Bible say about common sense?](#)
- [Six Ways to Know God's Will](#) - Robert Morgan
- [How to Know the Will of God](#) - John MacArthur
- [Responding to the Will of God](#) - John MacArthur
- [Prayer and the Will of God](#) - John MacArthur
- [What Is the Will of God and How Do We Know It?](#) - John Piper
- [How to Know the Will of God: Finding Direction with the Renewed Mind](#)- John Piper
- [How Do I Find God's Will for My Life?](#) - John Piper

**MacDonald** summarizes how the early believers discerned the will of God and His guidance writing...

1. Through the Scriptures.
2. Through visions and prophecies.
3. Through circumstances.
4. Through the advice and initiative of other Christians.
5. Through direct communication, possibly in an inward, subjective manner. ([MacDonald, W & Farstad, A. Believer's Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

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**Illustration:** I read the story about a young woman who had prepared for missionary service on foreign fields.

She had been appointed by the mission board and was ready to sail when she received a telegram saying that her sister had died in a western state.

She cancelled her reservation and went home.

The sister left four little children and since there was no one to care for them this young woman had to stay with them.

Her heart was broken. She had dreamed of being a missionary and now she would never have a chance to go out for the Lord.

However, she submitted to the Lord's will and did the best she could for the children.

As they grew up, one by one they came to her saying, 'Aunt, I feel that God wants me to be a missionary.'

So instead of one person going out as a missionary, because of her faithfulness to God and His call four went out.

She came to see, after all, that God's way was the best way." (Jack Andrews Expository Studies – Understanding Acts)

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## **George Muller's (see bio) thoughts on finding the will of God...**

### **1. Surrender your own will**

I seek at the beginning to get my heart into such a state that it has no will of its own in regard to a given matter. Nine-tenths of the trouble with people generally is just here. Nine-tenths of the difficulties are overcome when our hearts are ready to do the Lord's will, whatever it may be. When one is truly in this state it is usually but a little way to the knowledge of what His will is.

### **2. Do not depend on feelings.**

Having done this, I do not leave the result to feeling or simple impression. If so, I make myself liable to great elusions.

### **3. Seek, the Spirit's will through God's Word.**

I seek the will of the Spirit of God through, or in connection with, the Word of God. The Spirit and the Word must be combined. If I look to the Spirit alone without the Word, I lay myself open to great delusion also. If the Holy Ghost guides us at all, He will do it according to the Scriptures and never contrary to them.

### **4. Note providential circumstances.**

Next I take into account providential circumstances. These often plainly indicate God's will in connection with His Word and Spirit.

### **5. Pray.**

I ask God in prayer to reveal His will to me aright.

### **6. Wait.**

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## **F B Meyer - THE GUIDANCE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT Acts 16:7-10.**

THE SPIRIT of Jesus often shuts doors in the long corridors of life. We pass along, trying one after another, but find that they are all locked, in order that we may enter the one that He has opened for us (Rev 3:7-8). Sometimes in following the Spirit's guidance we seem to come to a blank wall. The little missionary band found themselves facing the sea. They had not contemplated crossing to Europe, but there seemed no other course open. They walked to and fro on the sea-wall or landing-stage, looking over the restless waves, and noticing the strange costumes of sailors and travellers who had gathered in the thriving sea-port, which bore the name famous to all the world for the Siege of Troy.

It was with such thoughts in his heart that St. Paul slept that night in his humble lodging, and in his dreams, a man from Macedonia, like one he had seen on the quay, stood and beckoned to him (Acts 16:10, R.V.).

Where it is possible for the judgment to arrive at a right conclusion, on the suggestions that may be supplied by the Divine Spirit, we are left to think out the problems of our career. Within your reach are the materials needed for formulating a correct judgment; use them, balance the pros and cons, and looking up to God to prevent you from making a mistake, act. When once you have come to a decision, in faith and prayer, go forward, not doubting or looking back.

A small door may lead to a vast opportunity. St. Paul might have been discouraged by his reception in Europe. He looked for the man whom he had seen in the vision, but the only trace they could find of the worship of God

was the gathering together of a few women. How startled they must have been by the sudden appearance of these missionaries, but a mighty work for God began in the life of at least one of them "whose heart the Lord opened." Let us not despise the smallest opening, for we can never tell into what a wide place it may conduct us.

PRAYER - O God, since we know not what a day may bring forth, but only that the hour for serving Thee is always present, may we wake to the instant claims of Thy holy Will; not waiting for to-morrow, but yielding today. Consecrate with Thy presence the way our feet may go; and the humblest work will shine, and the roughest places be made plain. AMEN. (Our Daily Walk)

**F. B. Meyer** in his book **Paul A Servant of Jesus Christ** writes...

It is interesting to study the method of his guidance as it was extended towards these early heralds of the Cross. It consisted largely in prohibitions, when they attempted to take another course than the right. When they would turn to the left, to Asia, He stayed them; and when they sought to turn to the right, to Bithynia, again He stayed them. He shut all the doors along their route, and bolted them; so that they had no alternative but to go straight forward. In the absence of any prohibition, they were left to gather that they were treading the prepared path for which they had been created in Christ Jesus.

Whenever you are doubtful as to your course, submit your judgment absolutely to the Spirit of God, and ask Him to shut against you every door but the right one. Say, "Blessed Spirit, I cast on Thee the entire responsibility of closing against my steps any and every course which is not of God. Let me hear thy voice behind me whenever I turn to the right hand or the left. Put thine arrest on me. Do not suffer me."

In the meanwhile, continue along the path which you have been already treading. It lies in front of you; pursue it. Abide in the calling in which you were called. Keep on as you are, unless you are clearly told to do something else. Expect to have as clear a door out as you had in; and if there is no indication to the contrary, consider the absence of indication to be the indication of God's will that you are on his track.

The Spirit of Jesus waits to be to you, O pilgrim, what He was to Paul. Only be careful to obey his least prohibitions, and where, after believing prayer, there are no apparent hindrances, believe that you are on the way everlasting, and go forward with enlarged heart. "Teach me to do thy will, for Thou art my God: thy Spirit is good, lead me into the land of uprightness." Do not be surprised if the answer comes in closed doors. But when doors are shut right and left, an open road is sure to lead to Troas. There Luke awaits, and visions will point the way, where vast opportunities stand open, and faithful friends are waiting.

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### **Acts 16:6-7 The Macedonian Vision" - Allen Ross**

It is clear from Scripture that God was leading Paul and his company to the west and not back to the east. According to Acts 16:6 and 7, the company was traveling throughout Phrygia and Galatia because the Spirit kept them from preaching the word in the province of Asia. They came to the border of Mysia, the Spirit did not allow them to enter Bithynia. So they came back down the coast of what is now western Turkey and stayed in Troas (just to the southwest of Istanbul). Here during the night Paul had a vision of a man from Macedonia begging him to come over and help them. Of course, the rest of the Book of Acts will narrate Paul's journeys into Macedonia, Athens, Corinth and Rome.

What is clear from the text is that God wanted the Gospel to go to the West, and not turn back to the East. We can only reason that since the cultural influence of Greece and Rome was gradually spreading throughout the known world, the Gospel would travel more widely and more quickly than if it stayed in the Orient. And this is a cause for thanksgiving for people whose origins lay in that western region. One can only imagine how differently the history of the Christian movement would have been if Paul had turned back to the East and left Macedonia, Greece, Rome, and the Isles as they were. But he was the apostle to the Gentiles.

There is an interesting little aside from history that is worth thinking about. I looked at this briefly in an earlier devotion for the sake of thinking about how important decisions are. But there is another side to this comparison. Recall that Troas was an extremely important city in the days of Paul. It was the modern seaport city built just a little north of the probable sight of ancient Troy. Caesar had wanted to build the capital of the Roman Empire there, but instead remained in Rome. Why? Because according to tradition, when Troy fell to the Achaeans (see Homer's Iliad), one man escaped, a man named Aeneas, and he was essentially responsible for the founding of Rome. The Romans always considered that they stood in the tradition and heritage of Troy, that Troy was their mother, so to speak (and interestingly, the Church of Rome places great stock in the cultural and literary traditions from Troy). So from Troy one man went out and eventually came to Rome and began what turned out to be a vast empire.

And from the later city Troas, one man will be called by God to come to the West and help in the ministry. This one eventually will also end up in Rome and be influential in building the kingdom of God which will rival the empire and most certainly outlast it. This may be considered an interesting coincidence. But the more you work with Scripture the more of these historical

coincidences you discover, and you soon begin to suspect that God had a reason for doing things the way He did. God Himself was and is building a kingdom, greater than any mortals could build. And it will last forever. And near the beginning of the development of this kingdom He chose to direct Paul to the city of Troas, and from there call him to go to the center of Greek and Roman culture to proclaim the truth.

And God had perfectly prepared His servant for this. Paul was born a Jew, but was born into a family that had received Roman citizenship. He grew up in one of the finest centers of learning, Tarsus, where philosophers and teachers were present in abundance; but he also studied under Gamaliel, one of the great teachers of the law. He knew the Scriptures as well as anyone on earth; but he knew western thinking and philosophy better than any of the apostles. Clearly, God was at work in preparing the right man, for the right task; and so it is no surprise that God chose to lead him to the West in a significant way.

So one further implication from this event and the people involved is how the Lord calls people to places and tasks that they are most suited for. When Christians are trying to decide who should go where or who should do what, it is well to consider how God has worked in their lives to put them together (so to speak, as Psalm 139 describes). I have seen this happen again and again--people with background experiences in the secular world, or courses of study they took that to them seem not useful in their Christian service, all of a sudden discovering how those things open doors of service, or become useful in a way that they never imagined. It all reminds us how God forms and shapes His instruments within their cultures and from their backgrounds, for His work. Christians then need to be available for what God opens to them, and to be particularly aware that all their gifts and talents are to be surrendered to Him to use as He will.

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### **Acts 16:6-7 Troy and Troas - "The Tale of Two Cities and Their Impact on Civilization" - Allen Ross**

We have begun a tour of the lands of the Bible that began in Istanbul and will move across Turkey through the cities of the New Testament into Syria, to Aleppo and Damascus, and then south into Jordan. The second part of the trip will be a tour of the most significant places in Israel. The trip is thirty days in all; and so for the next thirty days the devotional thoughts will come from various locations we will be visiting.

After spending our first couple of days in Istanbul, we traveled down the coast to visit ancient Troy and Troas. What occurred in these places has had a significant impact on western civilization in ways that are incalculable. Troy is known to most students of history and classical literature from Homer's writings about the Trojan wars. Homer called Troy Ilium; and the Iliad is one of those works that is far too rich and full to be summarized in a paragraph or two. It goes far beyond the description of the wars and the participants to raise the deeper issues of religion, honor, virtue, justice, community, and the like. Its many themes and motifs address so much of what has become central to western civilization that it has for some time been required study in the better universities and colleges. And its influence on the art of the western world is profound.

If the wars of this region left their mark on western civilization through the Homeric literature, another event that took place nearby changed the course of world religion forever. In Troas, a little to the southwest of Troy (Ilium), Paul received the famous Macedonian Vision. Recall from Acts 16:6-7 that Paul and his company planned to turn back to the East with the Gospel but were hindered by the Holy Spirit. They went instead down to Mysia, to Troas. They had to leave some of the fascinating cities of Bythnia to the witness of others (see 1 Peter 1:1), two of which became prominent in later church history--Nicaea and Chalcedon.

Mysia formed the northwestern part of the Roman province of Asia. It was the closest to Europe, only the Propontis, the Hellespont, and the Aegean Sea separated it from that continent. At Troas Paul waited for guidance from the Lord. Here he met Luke, the physician. Some have suggested that Paul might have been stricken by malaria and had to call for a physician, but there is no evidence for this. Whatever happened, Luke now joined Paul and served in a number of ways, including writing Luke and Acts.

But it was here at Troas that a significant decision was made. He received a vision of a man from Macedonia calling for him to come over and help them (Acts 16:9). If Paul had turned back to retrace his steps through Asia Minor towards Syria and the East, Christianity might have remained mostly an eastern religion. Christianity, however, was to be taken beyond Asia, into the West, into Europe. The faith was not meant to remain a sect of Judaism. It was to move into a totally new spiritual and cultural setting with results that could not have been imagined. It would move to the western area of Macedonia, and then Greece and Rome, and from there find swift expansion throughout the Roman world.

This instructs us that the decisions we make in serving the Lord are never to be taken for granted. The decisions that Christians make in their service will have significant consequences for years to come, so that we must seek the Lord's will in everything in order that what we do and where we go will be what He wants. We do not know how the Holy Spirit prevented Paul and Luke from going East, whether it was some supernatural sign, or some circumstance that prevented them, or merely a feeling of unease. But they began to pray more earnestly concerning their decision, and God led them to the West and, in the long run, to us.

Why God did this is beyond our understanding. But perhaps the culture of Greece and Rome would facilitate the expansion of the church more so than the cities of the East. It certainly brought the Gentile world into the church. And then a couple of centuries later Constantine would make Byzantium--Istanbul--the center of a Christian kingdom that would last for a thousand years.

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**Acts 16:8 and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.**

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

NET Acts 16:8 so they passed through Mysia and went down to Troas.

GNT Acts 16:8 παρελθ ντες δ τ ν Μυσ αν κατ βησαν ε ς Τρ δα.

NLT Acts 16:8 So instead, they went on through Mysia to the seaport of Troas.

ESV Acts 16:8 So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas.

YLT Acts 16:8 and having passed by Mysia, they came down to Troas.

- **Troas:** Ac 16:11 20:5 2Co 2:12 2Ti 4:13
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

Lystra > Troas  
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## OBEDIENCE TO THE SPIRIT OF JESUS

**G. Campbell Morgan** said, "It is better to go to Troas with God, than anywhere else without Him."

**Swindoll** - Rather than write off their unfortunate situations as coincidental, they recognized the sovereign hand of Christ guiding them where He wanted. It takes a spirit sensitive to the Lord's leading to maintain this kind of perspective. We naturally tend to wonder what we did wrong or, if we know we did nothing wrong, play the victim. We compare ourselves to others for whom doors seem to open left and right. We try harder to go where the Lord has forbidden, or we give up and go home after a few doors slam shut. Paul and Silas did none of that. They persisted, never doubting their call. Simply stated, they submitted to the sovereign direction of God. (Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary – Acts)

**And passing by Mysia they came down to Troas** - Mysia was a province in northwest Asia Minor. See [map](#) which shows that from their location in [Bithynia](#) they would have to pass through (they did not actually "bypass" but walked through) [Mysia](#) in order to reach [Troas](#) on the coast (see [map 1](#), [map 2](#)) Luke does not tell us why Paul and Silas did not stop in Mysia to proclaim the Gospel, but in context of Acts 16:7, clearly the Spirit was leading them step by step (Rich Mullins' great classic "[Sometimes by Step](#)")

**Passing by** ([3928](#)) ([parerchomai](#) from [para](#) = beside, near + [erchomai](#) = come, go) means to pass near, pass by (Mt 8:28, Mk 6:48, Acts 24:7 "came along") or pass away and is used in both a literal and figurative sense, with the figurative uses predominating in the NT. Clearly the literal sense is intended in this context.

**NET Note on passing by** - Although the normal meaning for [parerchomai](#) is "pass by, go by," it would be difficult to get to Troas from where Paul and his companions were without going through rather than around Mysia. BDAG 776 s.v. [parerchomai](#) list some nonbiblical examples of the meaning "go through, pass through," and give that meaning for the usage here.

**Came down to Troas** - **Came down** signifies that literally they came down from the elevated highlands to the sea level elevation of [Troas](#) on the coast.

**Troas** was a port city (and surrounding region) on the northwest coast of Asia Minor, near ancient Troy.

**Acts 16:9 A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."**

KJV 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.

NET Acts 16:9 A vision appeared to Paul during the night: A Macedonian man was standing there urging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us!"

GNT Acts 16:9 κα ραμα δι [τ ς] νυκτ ς τ Πα λ φθη, ν ρ Μακεδ ν τις ν στ ς κα παρακαλ ν α τ ν κα λ γων, Διαβ ς ε ς Μακεδον αν βο θησον μ ν.

NLT Acts 16:9 That night Paul had a vision: A man from Macedonia in northern Greece was standing there,

pleading with him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us!"

ESV Acts 16:9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

CSB Acts 16:9 During the night a vision appeared to Paul: A Macedonian man was standing and pleading with him, "Cross over to Macedonia and help us!"

NIV Acts 16:9 During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us."

- **vision** : Acts 2:17,18 9:10-12 10:3,10-17,30 11:5-12 18:9,10 22:17-21 Ac 27:23,24 2Co 12:1-4,7
- **Macedonia** : Ac 18:5 19:21 Ro 15:26 2Co 7:5 8:1 9:2 11:9 1Th 1:7,8 4:10
- **Come** : Ac 8:26-31 9:38 10:32,33 11:13,14 Ro 10:14,15
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE MACEDONIAN CALL FOR HELP!

**A vision appeared to Paul in the night** - As described below, God used visions at several strategic points in Acts - one pair of visions ("double vision" - pun intended) was instrumental in Paul's conversion, another pair of visions ("double vision") was instrumental in opening the Gospel to the Gentiles and here a third strategic vision (this one a single vision) God would use to fling open the door to European evangelism and ultimately to the entire world (including both you who are reading and myself who is writing)! God's ways are so amazing and so manifold! Won't Heaven be worth the wait as we see His amazements throughout eternity!

**Warren Wiersbe** wrote, "It is comforting to know that even apostles were not always clear as to God's will for their ministries!"

**Swindoll** adds that "When you're following the plan of God, dead ends are never mistakes." (Ibid)

**A T Robertson** - Twice Paul had been hindered by the Holy Spirit from going where he wanted to go. Most men would have gone back home with such rebuffs, but not so Paul. Now the call is positive and not negative, to go "far hence to the Gentiles" (Acts 22:21). He had little dreamed of such a call when he left Antioch. Paul's frequent visions always came at real crises in his life.

**Vision** (3705)(**horama** from **horāō** = to see, behold; English - *panorama*) describes literally that which is seen, as opposed to a figment of one's imagination (Mt 17:9; Ac 7:31; 10:3, 17, 19; 18:9). It is something that Paul saw with his eyes, but it was still a supernatural vision by which he received divine communication.

In Matthew's use Jesus refers to His transfiguration commanding Peter, John and James "Tell the **vision** to no one until the Son of Man has risen from the dead." (Mt 17:9) Luke has most of the NT uses of **horama** (see below) and describes Jesus appearing to Ananias in a vision telling him to go to Saul who had also seen Ananias in a vision (Acts 9:10, 12+). This "double vision" was reproduced in the parallel visions of Cornelius as God begins to open the Gentiles to the Gospel (Acts 10:3+) and Peter's daytime vision in (Acts 10:17+, Acts 11:5+).

All 12 uses of **horama** in NT (most by Luke) -

Matt. 17:9; Acts 7:31; Acts 9:10; Acts 9:12; Acts 10:3; Acts 10:17; Acts 10:19; Acts 11:5; Acts 12:9; Acts 16:9;  
Acts 16:10; Acts 18:9

**A man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him and saying** - **Macedonia** (see area in blue) was the Roman province of Macedonia in Greece. See [Map of Second Missionary Journey Standing](#) (histemi) is the [perfect tense](#) indicating he remained standing as he continued to appeal and implore ([present tense](#)) to come help (a vivid picture).

**Ryrie** - Although the **man of Macedonia** represented all the culture, intelligence, religion, and achievements of Greek civilization, he was spiritually bankrupt. Here the Gospel turns to Europe. So after two "no's", then a "go".

**Appealing** (3870)(**parakaleo** from **para** = side of, alongside, beside + **kaleo** = call) means literally to call one alongside, to call someone to oneself, to call for, to summon. **Parakaleo** can include the idea of giving help or aid but the primary sense in the NT is to urge someone to take some action, especially some ethical course of action.

**Come over to Macedonia and help us** - What to do, where to go, why to go! The plea could not have been stated more plainly.

**Gangel on Macedonia** - Named for Philip of Macedon, it had become a Roman province in 148 b.c. Formerly a Greek kingdom,

Macedonia came under strong Athenian influence as early as five hundred years before Christ. There Aristotle came to tutor Alexander the Great after the death of Plato. No less an orator than Demosthenes verbally attacked "the Macedonian menace." Indeed, the army created by Philip of Macedon later followed his son Alexander all the way to the Ganges, overthrowing the Persians on the way. The Bible records several Macedonian Christians such as Gaius, Aristarchus, Secundus, Sopater, and Epaphroditus and their enthusiastic support for Paul (Acts 17:11; 19:29; 20:4; Phil. 4:10-19; 1 Thess. 2:8,17-20; 3:10). It is also likely Luke himself came from Philippi in Macedonia. (Holman New Testament Commentary -Acts)

**Come over** (1223) (**diabaino** from **dia** = through + **baino** = to step) means to step across, to pass through or over as for example, a body of water, a chasm, a valley, etc. (cf uses in Lxx - Ge 31:21; 1 Sa 13:7). BDAG - "to proceed from one side to another over a geographical area."

**Gilbrant** on **diabaino** - is used extensively in classical Greek and appears over 120 times in the Septuagint to translate different forms of the Hebrew term 'āvar, meaning "pass over, through, by." ([Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary](#))

Liddell-Scott on **diabaino** - I. to make a stride, walk or stand with the legs apart, of a man planting himself firmly for fighting, II. With accusative - to step across, passive - over a ditch or river, lb. 2. absol. to cross over, Lat. trajicere, Hdt., etc.

**Diabaino** - 3 uses in the NT - Lk. 16:26; Acts 16:9; Heb. 11:29

Lk. 16:26+ - 'And besides all this, between us (LAZARUS IN "ABRAHAM'S BOSOM") and you (THE RICH MAN) there is a **great chasm fixed**, so that those who wish to come over from here to you will not be able, and that none may **cross over** from there to us.'

Heb 11:29 By faith they **passed through** the Red Sea as though they were passing through dry land; and the Egyptians, when they attempted it, were drowned.

**Diabaino** in the **Septuagint** -

Ge 31:21,52; 32:10,22-23; Num. 32:7,29-30,32; 33:8,51; 35:10; Deut. 3:21,25,27-28; 4:21-22,26; 9:1; 11:8,29,31; 12:10; 27:2-4,12; 28:1; 30:18; 31:2,13; 32:47; Jos. 1:2,11,14; 2:23; 3:1,11,14,17; 4:1,7,10-13,22-23; 5:1; 22:19; 24:11; Jdg. 3:28; 6:33; 8:4; 10:9; 11:29,32; 12:3,5; 19:18; 1 Sam. 13:7; 14:1,4,6,8; 26:13; 2 Sam. 2:29; 10:17; 15:22-23,33; 16:9; 17:16,21-22,24; 19:18,31,33,36ff; 24:5; 1 Ki. 2:37; 2 Ki. 2:8-9,14; 4:8; 1 Chr. 12:15; 19:17; Job 19:8; Ps. 68:7; Prov. 9:18; 30:29; Isa. 16:8; 43:2; 45:14; 47:2; Ezek. 47:5; Amos 5:5; 6:2

**Guzik** - God still calls people to the mission field. Perhaps many today will encounter a "Macedonia man" who will call them out to the mission field. Would to God that those who hear a "Macedonian man" today will respond the way Paul and his team responded!

## THE CRY OF EUROPE FOR CHRIST

**Help** (997) (**boetheo** from **boé** = a cry, exclamation + **theo** = to run) means to run upon hearing a cry, to give assistance. What a great picture this verb gives us of Paul's vision of a man crying out for help and Paul preparing to "run" to meet the need, the need of every soul of man for the Gospel of God, that He might be spared hell and gain heaven!

**Boethéo** means to **succor** (KJV says God "is able to succour them that are [continually being] tempted" - see Heb 2:18KJV) which is a word you may not be too familiar with, but which means literally to run to or run to support hence, to help or relieve when in difficulty, want or distress; to assist and deliver from suffering; as, to succor a besieged city; to succor prisoners. (succor is derived from Latin succurrere = to run up, run to help, from sub- = up + currere to run).

All 8 uses of **boetheo** in the NT - Matt. 15:25; Mk. 9:22,24; Acts 16:9; 21:28; 2 Co. 6:2; Heb. 2:18; Rev. 12:16

The Macedonian man cries **Help** using the [aorist imperative](#) which is a command that says in essence "Do it now!" "Do not delay!" "The need is urgent!"

**THOUGHT** - The greatest **help** we can bring anyone is the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ! It is good for us to bring **help** (social, medical needs, etc) but without the life changing Gospel of Christ, what **help** of eternal value have you given them? They need help not only to escape their temporal social disadvantage but their soul's eternal destination (see Eternal Punishment).

**George MacDonald** wrote that "Nothing makes a man strong like a call for help!"

**Spurgeon** has an interesting thought - Our dreams often follow the leading thoughts of the day; or, if not of the day, yet the chief



thoughts that are upon the mind. Paul dreams about mission work, for his heart is in it. I should not wonder if some before me, who are deeply engaged in earnest Christian work, have often dreamt about their Sunday-school, or their mission-station. Where the mind goes when we are awake, it often goes when we are asleep. This vision that appeared to Paul was supernatural; and was an indication of what God wanted him to do.

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### **Robert Morgan - Come and Help Us - Acts 16:9**

One incident helped change Western civilization—Paul's vision of a man from northern Greece led him to take the gospel westward into Europe instead of eastward into Asia—with far-reaching results. Nearly 400 years later, a remarkably similar dream changed all of Irish history. [Patrick, a teenager in England](#), was kidnapped by pirates and scuttled away to Ireland where he was enslaved as a herdsman of swine. There he labored six years before escaping and returning to his relatives. Back in England, he resumed his education and prepared for his career. But one evening—"in the depth of the night," he later said—he dreamed a man from Ireland appeared to him, saying, "Holy boy, we are asking you to come home and walk among us again." Patrick awoke "struck to the heart." To his family's dismay, he began making plans to return to Ireland, land of his captivity, this time as a slave of Christ. He felt God calling him there as a missionary. Arriving in Ireland in A.D. 432, Patrick went to work on the west and northern sides of the island, seeking to evangelize the Celts. These were tribal peoples who lived in clans rather than towns, and who raised cattle and occasionally engaged in tribal warfare. Their religion consisted of [Druid](#) superstitions involving magic, and animal (even human) sacrifice. Patrick traveled from village to village, preaching and evangelizing. In his Confessions, the first personal missionary accounts in history, he writes that he faced death twelve times; nevertheless, he continued for more than 30 years, planting some 200 churches and baptizing an estimated 100,000 people. He gave credit to God, calling himself, "Patrick the sinner, an unlearned man to be sure, that none should ever say that it was my ignorance that accomplished any small thing; but judge ye and let it be most truly believed, that it was the gift of God." (From this Verse)

### **Related Resource:**

- [Who was Saint Patrick and why do we celebrate St. Patrick's Day?](#)
- 

### **The Man of Macedonia - Robert Neighbour**

"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 16:9).

In the 6th verse we read concerning Paul and Timotheus, that, they "were forbidden \* \* to preach the Word in Asia". In verse 7 we read that "after they were come to Mysia, they assayed (were attempting) to go into [Bithynia](#); but the Spirit suffered them not".

Perhaps Paul found it somewhat difficult at first to understand the reason for the blocking of his way. However he was not long in doubt. For Paul had a vision in the night, and there stood before him a man of Macedonia beseeching him, and saying, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us".

Then Paul, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called them to preach the Gospel unto them, "Immediately \* \* endeavoured to go into Macedonia".

Thus did the Holy Spirit direct the feet of His servants. God saw not only the man of Macedonia, but he saw in Europe, lying beyond, a soil that would prove fertile to the Truth; and beyond Europe he saw our own land, America, in the coming days, the land of the Puritans and the land of the open heart and of freedom in worship.

Thus it was that through Paul, the Gospel first traveled westward and not eastward. How thankful we should be for the man of Macedonia, and for the purposes of God which sent the Gospel out from Jerusalem, westward toward Italy and afterwards on to the British Isles, and afterward across the seas.

What a debt we owe to others. Now God is calling us to girdle the whole world, east and west and north and south with the story of salvation.

"Have you had a kindness shown, pass it on,  
'Twas not given thee alone, pass it on;  
Let it travel down the years,  
Let it help another's fears,  
Till in Heaven the deed appears,  
Pass it on."

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### **James Smith - THE CRY OF THE HELPLESS Acts 16:9-15**

Paul and Silas had been "forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the Word in Asia," and when they assayed to go into [Bithynia](#), the "Spirit suffered them not." These are facts full of deep significance to every servant of the Lord Jesus Christ. They reveal how completely the Holy Spirit has control over their lives. It is the mission of this Great Teacher come from God to guide us into all truth,

and to carry on the work of God through the lives of those who are wholly yielded up to Him. Our subject may be divided into three parts—

1. The New Call. "Come over into Macedonia, and help us" (v. 9). It now became plain to Paul why the Holy Spirit had been closing other doors in his face. Macedonia needed the help that Paul and Silas, apostles of the Cross of Christ, were able to give. What help could they have given if they had not been possessors of the grace of God and the knowledge of His saving power, through the death and resurrection of His beloved Son. The best help anyone can get is to be lifted out of a life of sin and hopelessness into a life of holiness and victory. How the vision came to Paul we need not stop to inquire, it was simply the Lord's way of revealing His will to His servant (Rom. 10:14-15). May we not hear this cry for help, in a muffled fashion, rising in one form or another from every grade of social life to-day?

2. The Immediate Response. They at once obeyed, "assuredly gathering that the Lord had called them to preach the Gospel unto them" (v. 10). Paul and the Gospel were so vitally joined together that an open door to him meant an open door for the Gospel of Christ. When Paul said, "To me to live is Christ," he was stating not an article in his creed, but the all-absorbing principle of his heaven-born existence. Let us beware of being disobedient to any heavenly vision that may be beckoning us into new spheres of service, or into higher and fuller experiences of the deep things of the Spirit of God. It is only those who, like Paul and Silas, have had their lives enriched with the grace and power of Jesus Christ that can render the help that is needed to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death and despair.

3. The Blessed Results (v. 13-15). They were not long in finding out the place of prayer. It may have been a spot by the river-side, set apart as a public oratory, because of its natural adaptations. In this roofless "house of prayer" Paul and Silas sat and spake the wonderful words of life to the women which resorted thither. The interest centres in a "certain woman named Lydia, whose heart the Lord opened." She had been a worshipper of God, but now the door of her heart was opened to receive the message of the Gospel, sent to her by the Lord, through His servants. Take note that the "Word of Salvation" sent from God to man is not so much for the head as for the heart. With the heart man believeth unto righteousness. The open heart will always be "attentive unto the things" spoken by the servant of God, and God is sure to open hearts for the reception of the message that He hath sent. Another evidence of the open heart is a willingness to confess Christ and a love for the fellowship of the people of God (v. 15). We can never work out our own salvation until God hath worked it in us. Some hearts are opened as with the gentle kiss of light (2 Cor. 4:6), others have been broken open as with a rod of iron. To open the heart to the Lord is to give Him the control of all the springs of the life. Son, give Me thine heart.

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### **Closed Doors Acts 16:5–10 - Charles Stanley**

I know your works. See, I have set before you an open door, and no one can shut it; for you have a little strength, have kept My word, and have not denied My name. - Rev 3:8

You have heard the cliché, "When God closes a door, He opens a window." However, many times this does not hold true. God may close a door to something we desire greatly because He has something better in mind. And His best is much greater than an open window. Still, when you confront a closed door, the natural response is to ask, "Why, Lord?" Yet in Acts 16 when God closed a door of ministry, the apostle Paul never questioned God's reasoning or timing. He might have wondered what was happening, but he never expressed anything but total trust in God's wisdom (Acts 16:7–8). Paul and his party of missionaries responded in obedience to Christ. When you confront a closed door, turn to the Lord, and ask for His guidance and blessing. No matter how difficult it seems, surrender your personal desires concerning the entire matter. God had a plan in mind for Paul's ministry, but at that moment it did not include [Bithynia](#). A few days later the spiritual door was opened for him to go into Macedonia, which was an even greater field of service. God's delays are often preludes to great blessing. His denials are sent for our protection, and the times He requires us to wait are moments He uses to build our faith. Be willing to wait for His timing in your life and ministry, and you will not be disappointed.

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### **Our Daily Bread - THE MAN FROM MACEDONIA - Acts 16:9**

When the apostle Paul saw in a vision the man from Macedonia, it changed the history of the world. Heeding the man's plea to "come over to Macedonia," Paul altered his plans. It was in Macedonia he led Lydia to the Lord, and it was there that the evangelization of the Western world began.

All Christians should be on the lookout for "**the man from Macedonia**." That man or woman may be well-educated, or have no education at all. He may drive an expensive car, or he may be poor and eke out a living ransacking garbage cans. He may live next door, down the street, or across the sea. He may speak a different language. But wherever you find him, and whatever his situation, he has one pressing need -- to know Jesus Christ as his Savior.

Sometimes that need is expressed as a cry for help. At other times it is veiled in bitter hostility to the Savior and the gospel. Many times his sins and errors and crimes announce this desperate condition. Yet despite the thousand different ways he voices that

need, the plea is always the same: "Come over... and help us" (Acts 16:9).

Sooner or later someone will call out to you for help. Will you be quick to answer?--[Haddon W. Robinson](#) ([Click to go to the full devotional including a related picture and a link at the bottom of the page to one of their excellent devotional booklets](#). Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

O stir me, O stir me, Lord, till all my heart  
Is filled with compassion for those who are lost,  
Until Your compelling love drives me to pray  
And follow Your leading, not counting the cost.  
-- Anon

**If you've accepted Christ's invitation to COME,  
have you obeyed his commission to GO?**

**Acts 16:10 When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.**

KJV 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.

NET Acts 16:10 After Paul saw the vision, we attempted immediately to go over to Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to proclaim the good news to them.

GNT Acts 16:10 ς δ τ ραμα εδεν, εθως ζητσαμεν ξελθεν ες Μακεδοναν συμβιβζοντες τι προσκληται μς θες εαγγελιασθαι ατους.

NLT Acts 16:10 So we decided to leave for Macedonia at once, having concluded that God was calling us to preach the Good News there.

ESV Acts 16:10 And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

CSB Acts 16:10 After he had seen the vision, we immediately made efforts to set out for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to evangelize them.

NIV Acts 16:10 After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

NJB Acts 16:10 Once he had seen this vision we lost no time in arranging a passage to Macedonia, convinced that God had called us to bring them the good news.

GWN Acts 16:10 As soon as Paul had seen the vision, we immediately looked for a way to go to Macedonia. We concluded that God had called us to tell the people of Macedonia about the Good News.

NRS Acts 16:10 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.

YLT Acts 16:10 and when he saw the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go forth to Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord hath called us to preach good news to them,

- **immediately** : Ac 10:29 26:13 Ps 119:60 Pr 3:27,28 2Co 2:12,13
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **A PHYSICIAN JOINS THE TEAM**

As a retired physician, this is one of my favorite sections. Luke is not just writing Acts, but now he is living out Acts! I cannot wait to accost him in Heaven. O, the many wonderful things he must have seen but was not inspired to record!

With a flourish of alliteration **John MacArthur** comments that "This passage illustrates the foundational principles of evangelism: God uses people with the right passion and the right priority, with the right personnel taking the right precautions, to make the right

presentation in the right place. Any evangelistic methodology must be evaluated in the light of such realities.' (Ibid0

**When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia**- God wanted Paul and his team to go to Troas and pick up a doctor named Luke. If God wouldn't have said "no" to Paul two times, we might not have a gospel and a Book of Acts written by Luke! This speaks of their immediate obedience to God's vision! No delay. No excuses. No procrastination. Remember that **delayed obedience** is always tantamount to **disobedience**! Do not be deceived!

This is the first use here of **we** in Acts (instead of "they,") and clearly indicates that Luke, the author of the book of Acts, had joined the missionary party at **Troas**. After Paul and Silas and Timothy left Philippi, Luke changed the pronoun from **we** to **they** in Acts 17:1, which suggests that he remained behind in Philippi to watch over the infant church after Paul left. It was some six to seven years later when Luke rejoined Paul "But these had gone on ahead and were waiting for **us** at Troas." (Acts 20:5) Finally, in the third **we** section, Luke is with Paul as they sail for Italy "And when it was decided that **we** should sail for Italy, they proceeded to deliver Paul and some other prisoners to a centurion of the Augustan cohort named Julius." (Acts 27:1)

**Immediately** (2112)(**eutheos** from **euthus** = straight, immediate) is an adverb which generally means at once, right away, forthwith, straightaway, without an interval of time or a point of time subsequent to a previous point of time. **Eutheos** is a "time sensitive" word (see **expression of time**) and should prompt questions like "To what time does it refer?" or "What happens in this time?"

**David Jeremiah** wrote, "The only way to be able to say 'Yes' to the place God wants you to serve is if you say 'No' to the places that are not His will for you... When God calls you to serve, make sure you serve for the right purpose. Make sure you get the right people. By all means, get in the right place. And whatever God tells you to do, do it immediately."

**Concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them**- The message of the vision was "Come over and help us" and the missionaries reached the conclusion that the help the "Man" was calling for was the Gospel of salvation. How did the facts "come together" and allow them to arrive at a conclusion? Two "no's" plus one "vision" added up to a directive **to preach the gospel** (to "help" cf Acts 16:9)

**Jack Andrews** "The missionaries discussed the vision and it came together that God had called them to preach the gospel to the Macedonians." (Ibid)

**Concluding** (4822)(**sumbibazo** from **sun** = union + **bibazo** = to force) means to cause to come together, to bring together, to join together. It is used more literally and in a physical sense in (see Eph 4:16+, cf Col 2:2+ "knit together").

**A T Robertson** adds that **sumbibazo** is "A very striking word, present active participle of **sumbibazo**, old verb to make go together, to coalesce or knit together, to make this and that agree and so to conclude. Already in Acts 9:22 of Paul's preaching. This word here gives a good illustration of the proper use of the reason in connection with revelation, to decide whether it is a revelation from God, to find out what it means for us, and to see that we obey the revelation when understood. God had called them to preach to the Macedonians. They had to go.

**Spurgeon** - In the vision, the man prayed, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us." The best help that Paul could render to the Macedonians was "to preach the gospel unto them." The best help you can give men socially is to help them religiously; and the best religious help is to preach the gospel to them.

**Robert Morgan** in his sermon "**Six Ways to Know God's Will**" (click for full sermon) references this event in Acts as an example of the "**Trend of Circumstances** Fifth, the trend of circumstances. God often reveals his will by providentially arranging the circumstances of life. When you study the book of Acts, we discover that God sometimes led Paul the apostle by means of open and closed doors. In Acts 16, for example, Paul wanted to go into Asia and evangelize the Orient, but the doors wouldn't open for him. He couldn't get through the borders. But the doors into Europe opened virtually by themselves, and Paul concluded that God wanted him to take the Gospel westward.

**Morgan** in another sermon "**Taking the Next Step**" This is what Paul discovered when he came to a standstill in Acts 16. He had intended to devote his second missionary journey to Asia, but the doors kept closing on him. 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. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into **Bithynia**, but the Spirit did not permit them. So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. 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." 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. When the doors kept closing, Paul just looked around for one that was open and took the next logical step by faith.

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**Illustration**: Did you know that the charter of Massachusetts that was granted by Charles I, contains an expression of hope that the settlers would impact their world.

In the charter it is stated that the settlers “may win and incite the natives of the country to the knowledge and obedience of the only true God and Savior of mankind and the Christian faith, which is out royal intention, and the adventurer’s free profession, and the principal end of this plantation.”

The first seal of Massachusetts represents an Indian giving utterance to the words, “Come over here and help us.”

God often changes our plans, interrupts our schedules, interferes with our will to get His will done in and through our lives.(Jack Andrews Expository Studies – Understanding Acts)

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Did you know:

- David Livingstone planned to go to China—God led him to Africa
- Alexander Mackay prepared for work in Madagascar, the Lord directed him to Uganda to aid in founding one of the most remarkable missions in the world.
- William Carey proposed to go the South Sea, but God directed him to India, where he gave the Bible to the millions in their native tongue. (Jack Andrews Expository Studies – Understanding Acts)

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**Acts 16:11 So putting out to sea from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and on the day following to Neapolis;**

KJV Acts 16:11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;

NET Acts 16:11 We put out to sea from Troas and sailed a straight course to Samothrace, the next day to Neapolis,

GNT Acts 16:11 ναχθ ντες δ π Τρ δος ε θυδρομ σαμεν ε ς Σαμοθρ κην, τ δ πιο σ ε ς Ν αν Π λιν

NLT Acts 16:11 We boarded a boat at Troas and sailed straight across to the island of Samothrace, and the next day we landed at Neapolis.

ESV Acts 16:11 So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis,

CSB Acts 16:11 Then, setting sail from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, the next day to Neapolis,

NIV Acts 16:11 From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day on to Neapolis.

NAB Acts 16:11 We set sail from Troas, making a straight run for Samothrace, and on the next day to Neapolis,

NKJ Acts 16:11 Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next day came to Neapolis,

NJB Acts 16:11 Sailing from Troas we made a straight run for Samothrace; the next day for Neapolis,

GWN Acts 16:11 So we took a ship from Troas and sailed straight to the island of Samothrace. The next day we sailed to the city of Neapolis,

NRS Acts 16:11 We set sail from Troas and took a straight course to Samothrace, the following day to Neapolis,

YLT Acts 16:11 having set sail, therefore, from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, on the morrow also to Neapolis,

- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- See [Map of Second Missionary Journey](#)

## SETS FOOT ON EUROPE!

Just to keep an approximate time frame in mind, it is now about the year 50 AD (or a little later).

**So putting out to sea from Troas** - The most efficient way to go the approximately 135 miles from **Troas** to **Macedonia** was via the sea. And so the missionaries leave the continent of Asia on their way to the continent of Europe.

### [Wherever He Leads I Will God](#)

B. B. McKinney

It may be through the shadows dim, or o'er the stormy sea,  
I take my cross and follow Him, wherever He leadeth me.

My heart, my life, my all I bring to Christ who loves me so;  
He is my Master, Lord, and King, wherever He leads I'll go.

Wherever He leads I'll go, wherever He leads I'll go.  
I'll follow my Christ who loves me so, wherever He leads I'll go.

**G Campbell Morgan** writes "Oh, to go, not where I may choose, even by my love of the Lord, but where I am driven by the Lord's command. Circumstances of difficulty are opportunities for faith, and the measure of our perplexity in service and in Christian life is the measure of our opportunity. Let us follow the gleam, though the darkness threaten to envelop. Let us be true to the inward monitor, and if in being true, suddenly illness prevent, and we cannot follow, then rest in the Lord in the darkness, and know that God's shortest way to Troas may be athwart our inclinations and purposes. It is better to go to Troas with God, than anywhere else without Him."

**John Phillips** wrote, "To preach to the Greeks, who had given the world culture, art, sport, democracy, oratory, ideas. To preach beneath the shadow of Mount Olympus, where the Greek had created fallen gods in the magnified image of fallen man. What a mission field! Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Corinth, even Athens itself. Paul could have received no greater call."

**A straight course to Samothrace** - This phrase is a nautical term which means "**sailing before the wind**". [Samothrace](#) is an island (enlarge the picture above) about 80 miles northeast of Troas in the northern part of the Aegean Sea. The ship with the missionaries anchored for one night at Samothrace. Do you think anyone on that island heard the Gospel? This is a rhetorical question of course! Paul lived to preach Christ and Him crucified! And we should do likewise beloved, for the time is short!

**Swindoll** - Draw a line on a map from Troas to Neapolis, and you will see that Samothrace is out of the way. The phrase "**straight course**" was a nautical expression meaning the ship sailed to its planned destination without having to tack (chart a zigzag course) against the wind. (Ibid)

**And on the day following to Neapolis** - [Neapolis](#) (means "new city" but it actually 500 years old; modern day Kavalla in Turkey) was the port of Philippi was about 70 miles from Samothrace. It took them two days to make the journey. Their stay overnight was most likely to avoid the hazards of sailing at night. In any event on another trip in the opposite direction it would take five days, this second voyage being slower apparently because of contrary winds, Luke recording...

And we sailed from Philippi after the days of Unleavened Bread, and came to them at Troas within five days;  
and there we stayed seven days. (Acts 20:6).

The wisdom and greatness of God's sovereign plan of salvation begins to unfold. In Paul's mind as he traveled through Asia and tried to enter [Bithynia](#), he sought to reach a few of the cities in this region. On the other hand, God had a much bigger plan for He wanted Paul to reach an entire continent for Jesus Christ!

### **Via Egnatia**

Paul and party probably traveled on a Roman roadway much like the one above.

**Neapolis** was the seaport for **Philippi** which was located about 8-10 miles inland as one treks along the [Via Egnatia](#) ([picture of road upon which Paul probably entered Philippi](#)) just over a small range of mountains. The paved [Via Egnatia](#) extended some 530 miles from [Dyrrachium](#) (Modern day Albania) on the Adriatic coast across Macedonia to **Neapolis** on the [Aegean Sea](#), traversing through major metropolitan centers such as [Thessalonica](#).

**Jack Andrews** - Paul, Silas, and Timothy were the 1<sup>st</sup> missionary team to get some divine redirection. What do we learn from the missionaries and the Lord here? John MacArthur wrote, "The missionary team's experience illustrates a basic principle of knowing

God's will: to move ahead and allow Him to close doors until the right opportunity is reached."

- Are we seeking the will of God? Are we obeying the will of God? Are you willing to go wherever the Lord leads?
- Are you willing to do what the Lord tells you?
- Have you surrendered your life and your will to the Lord Jesus Christ?
- Are we on mission with the Lord?
- Are we pressing on in spite of closed doors?
- Are we frustrated in church work?
- Are you serving the Lord where He wants you?
- Are you doing what the Lord wants you to do? (Ibid)

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**H A Ironside** - "Young people sometimes hear a fervent missionary from a distant field tell of the need of young men and young women for work in Africa or China or in some other country. They say, 'I must answer the call.' They arrange to leave everything here and go out to the mission field, only to find that nobody wants them. And they say, 'Isn't that queer? They were pleading that we come, and instead of wanting us they are ready, in some instances, to kill us.' Was the missionary wrong? Did he give a false impression of conditions? Not at all! The heathen do not realize their need often until the preaching of the true God gives them a sense of their real condition, but it is that need, nevertheless, which calls for someone to help."

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#### **Acts 16:11-34**

I will praise you among the nations, O Lord. - Psalm 18:49

#### **TODAY IN THE WORD**

Several days ago (see November 8), we read Moses' great song of praise after the miraculous parting of the Red Sea. Then we read how God called the Israelites to be a holy nation that would bear witness to God. Sandwiched in between these passages is today's account of Moses' father-in-law. Notice Jethro's response when Moses recounted God's actions: "Now I know that the Lord is greater than all other gods" (v. 11). This is a confession of faith! In other words, Jethro came to know who the Lord truly is because of Moses' gratitude. In today's passage from Acts, we see a similar connection between thanksgiving and witness.

Yesterday we read that Paul wrote to the Philippians while in prison. This was certainly not Paul's first imprisonment. Paul had even been in the jail in Philippi! In Acts 16, we read about the first convert in Philippi, Lydia. As Paul and Silas continued to share the gospel, they were followed by a girl possessed by some spirit that enabled her to predict the future.

After several days of being followed by her, Paul rebuked the evil spirit within her. Although this poor girl was set free, those profiting from her were very angry. Eventually, Paul and Silas were flogged and bound in leg irons. For many people, such circumstances would not prompt praise songs! But this is exactly what Paul and Silas were doing. Under Roman law, the jailor could have been executed had any of the prisoners escaped. This is why Paul assured him that none have fled (v. 29). The jailor's question to Paul about how to be saved reflects his understanding that his own life had been spared because the prisoners were all present. It seems that he had also been affected by Paul's and Silas's praise. Like the example of Jethro and Moses, gratitude to the Lord opened the way for others to respond to the Lord.

**TODAY ALONG THE WAY** - Several days ago, we suggested that sharing your gratitude for something that the Lord had done in your life with a nonbeliever might be a good way to share the gospel. Today's passages, especially Acts 16, also encourage us that when we respond to our circumstances, particularly the difficult ones, with gratitude to our Lord, we bear witness to others around us of His existence and His goodness. For many, gratitude to God and hardship do not go together, so our unexpected attitude offers food for thought.

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#### **Acts 16:11-15**

Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. - 1 Peter 4:9

#### **TODAY IN THE WORD**

The "domestic arts" have become big business. Magazines and books focused on cooking and home improvement have experienced soaring sales, and millions of viewers tune in to the Food Network and Home & Garden Television (HGTV) for dining tips or decorating insights. One downside to all this homey preoccupation relates to reported levels of contentment; increasingly Americans cite their own homes as "inadequate" and describe themselves as "overwhelmed" at the prospect of having family and friends invited into their homes.

Scripture gives several exhortations to believers regarding hospitality. Of course, God does not expect all of His children to live in homes that could be featured on television or cook like award-winning chefs. Our notions of hospitality must be shaped by God's

Word rather than the definitions given by our culture. The example of Lydia in our passage today can help us.

When Paul and Silas came to Philippi, they discovered no synagogue—apparently the city didn't have the minimum number of Jewish men required. Instead, they found a group of women gathered by the river to pray on the Sabbath. One of these, Lydia, is described as a businesswoman from the city of Thyatira; she was a dealer in purple cloth. While purple cloth was considered a luxury (see Luke 16:19), scholars note that it's not clear whether Lydia herself was wealthy. The Greek word for “dealer” could include both rich merchants as well as poorer tradesmen.

The most important facts about Lydia, however, were God's work in her life and her response to it. “The Lord opened her heart” and she accepted the gospel (v. 14). She and her household were baptized, and then she immediately offered hospitality to Paul and his companions. Lydia's invitation to her home was more than just a cultural politeness; her offer was motivated by her belief in the Lord and desire to serve others. Lydia's house became the meeting place for the growing number of believers in Philippi (v. 40), and the basis of the church in that city.

#### APPLY THE WORD

Lydia connected the practice of hospitality with her faith in the Lord Jesus. Also consider the link between hospitality and the gospel in Romans 12:13 and 3 John 8. How can you extend hospitality to others? The purpose is not to impress others but rather to meet their needs, whether the need is for shelter, food, companionship, relationship, or a safe place to feel cared for and loved. Ask the Lord to shape your attitude toward hospitality and to give you opportunities to offer this blessing to others.

**Acts 16:12 And from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia, a Roman colony; and we were staying in this city for some days.**

KJV 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.

NET Acts 16:12 and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of that district of Macedonia, a Roman colony. We stayed in this city for some days.

GNT Acts 16:12 κ κεθεν ε ς Φιλ ππουϲ, τις σ τ ν πρ τη[ς] μερ δος τ ς Μακεδον ας π λικς, κολων α. μεν δ ν τα τ τ π λει διατρ βοντες μ ρας τιν ς.

NLT Acts 16:12 From there we reached Philippi, a major city of that district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. And we stayed there several days.

ESV Acts 16:12 and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days.

CSB Acts 16:12 and from there to Philippi, a Roman colony, which is a leading city of that district of Macedonia. We stayed in that city for a number of days.

NIV Acts 16:12 From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

NAB Acts 16:12 and from there to Philippi, a leading city in that district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We spent some time in that city.

NKJ Acts 16:12 and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. And we were staying in that city for some days.

NJB Acts 16:12 and from there for Philippi, a Roman colony and the principal city of that district of Macedonia.

GWN Acts 16:12 and from there we went to the city of Philippi. Philippi is a leading city in that part of Macedonia, and it is a Roman colony. We were in this city for a number of days.

NRS Acts 16:12 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.

YLT Acts 16:12 thence also to Philippi, which is a principal city of the part of Macedonia -- a colony. And we were in this city abiding certain days,



- **colony** : Ac 16:21
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- See [Map of Second Missionary Journey](#)

Neapolis > Philippi  
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## PHILIPPI "ROME AWAY FROM ROME"

**Wiersbe** writes that "**Philippi** was a Roman colony, which meant that it was a '**Rome away from Rome.**' The emperor organized "**colonies**" by ordering Roman citizens, especially retired military people, to live in selected places so there would be strong pro-Roman cities in these strategic areas. Though living on foreign soil, the citizens were expected to be loyal to Rome, to obey the laws of Rome, and to give honor to the Roman emperor. In return, they were given certain political privileges, not the least of which was exemption from taxes. This was their reward for leaving their homes in Italy and relocating elsewhere." ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**What the Bible teaches** – The new territory opened up for the gospel, principally in Europe, focusses mainly on five cities, implying that this second journey could well be called *A Tale of Five Cities*. There is only one speech recorded compared with two during the first missionary journey. This speech (hardly a sermon, [17:22-31](#)) was delivered in Athens, and could well be compared with that to the people of Lystra in [14:15-17](#). But the amount of other detail given by Luke, now an eyewitness for part of the time, is greater than that given for the various places visited on the first journey. This detail embraces the kind of officials responsible for local government in all the places except Athens, and in every case Luke informs us about the condemnatory accusations made against the preachers, in addition to the usual stories of converts and reactions to the preachers.

**David J. Williams** notes that Philippi "possessed the *ius Italicum*, which carried the right of freedom (*libertas*), that is, they were self-governing, independent of the provincial government; the right of exemption from tax (*immunitas*); and the right of holding land in full ownership, as under Roman law, and of using Italian legal procedures and precedents. In 16:16-40 we have a clear picture of this procedure and one, moreover, that belongs precisely to this time. (New International Biblical Commentary: Acts)

**And from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia**- From **Neapolis** they travelled 8-10 miles to **Philippi**. See [Wikipedia note on Macedonia](#) which was the Roman province in Greece. **Leading** is **protos** which means first, foremost, most important, most prominent.

**Swindoll** - The seat of Roman government lay in Amphipolis, a little more than 35 miles southwest, so Philippi became known as a chief city because of its economy and influence. It commanded a strategic location for both land and sea trade. In addition to robust agriculture and gold-mining industries, the city was the site of a famous school of medicine. (Ibid)

**A T Robertson on Philippi** - The city (ancient name Krenides or Wells) was renamed after himself by Philip, the father of Alexander the Great. It was situated about a mile east of the small stream Gangites which flows into the river Strymon some thirty miles away. In this valley the Battle of Philippi was fought B.C. 42 between the Second Triumvirate (Octavius, Antonius, Lepidus) and Brutus and Cassius. In memory of the victory Octavius made it a colony (*κολωνία* [*kolōnía*]) with all the privileges of Roman citizenship, such as freedom from scourging, freedom from arrest save in extreme cases, and the right of appeal to the emperor. This Latin word occurs here alone in the N. T. Octavius planted here a colony of Roman veterans with farms attached, a military outpost and a miniature of Rome itself. The language was Latin. Here Paul is face to face with the Roman power and empire in a new sense. He was a new Alexander, come from Asia to conquer Europe for Christ, a new Caesar to build the Kingdom of Christ on the work of Alexander and Caesar. One need not think that Paul was conscious of all that was involved in destiny for the world. Philippi was on the Egnatian Way, one of the great Roman roads, that ran from here to Dyrrachium on the shores of the Adriatic, a road that linked the east with the west. The first of the district (*πρωτη της μεριδος* [*prōtē tēs meridos*]). Philippi was not the first city of Macedonia nor does Luke say so. That honour belonged to Thessalonica and even Amphipolis was larger than Philippi. It is not clear whether by *μερις* [*meris*] Luke means a formal division of the province, though the *Koiné* has examples of this geographical sense (*papyri*). There is no article with *πρωτη* [*prōtē*] and Luke may not mean to stress unduly the position of Philippi in comparison with Amphipolis. But it was certainly a leading city of this district of Macedonia.

**Guzik** - Philippi was "the place where the armies of Mark Antony and Octavian defeated Brutus and Cassius in the decisive battle of the second Roman civil war in 42 b.c." (Hughes) Because of this, many Roman soldiers retired in the area, and Philippi was proud of its Roman connection. (The Enduring Word Bible Commentary – Acts)

**A Roman colony** - A **Roman colony** was like a piece of Rome transplanted abroad so that those who held citizenship in a colony enjoyed the same rights they would have had if they had lived in Italy. Such cities were originally colonized by citizens of Rome.

Other colonies mentioned in Acts are Pisidian Antioch, Lystra, Troas, Ptolemais, and Corinth.

**MacArthur** notes that "Although eight other cities known to be Roman colonies appear in Acts, Philippi is the only one Luke refers to as a colony." (Ibid)

**Vincent** has a lengthy note on **colony** - A colony (κολωνία). Roman towns were of two classes: municipia, or free towns, and colonies. The distinction, however, was not sharply maintained, so that, in some cases, we find the same town bearing both names. The two names involved no difference of right or of privilege. The historical difference between a colony and a free town is, that the free towns were taken into the state from without, while the colonies were offshoots from within. "The municipal cities insensibly equalled the rank and splendor of the colonies; and in the reign of Hadrian it was disputed which was the preferable condition, of those societies which had issued from, or those which had been received into, the bosom of Rome" (Gibbon, "Decline and Fall"). The **colony** was used for **three different purposes in the course of Roman history**: as a fortified outpost in a conquered country; as a means of providing for the poor of Rome; and as a settlement for veterans who had served their time. It is with the third class, established by Augustus, that we have to do here. The Romans divided mankind into citizens and strangers. An inhabitant of Italy was a citizen; an inhabitant of any other part of the empire was a peregrinus, or stranger. The colonial policy abolished this distinction so far as privileges were concerned. The idea of a colony was, that it was another Rome transferred to the soil of another country. In his establishment of colonies, Augustus, in some instances, expelled the existing inhabitants and founded entirely new towns with his colonists; in others, he merely added his settlers to the existing population of the town then receiving the rank and title of a colony. In some instances a place received these without receiving any new citizens at all. Both classes of citizens were in possession of the same privileges, the principal of which were, exemption from scourging, freedom from arrest, except in extreme cases, and, in all cases, the right of appeal from the magistrate to the emperor. The names of the colonists were still enrolled in one of the Roman tribes. The traveller heard the Latin language and was amenable to the Roman law. The coinage of the city had Latin inscriptions. The affairs of the colony were regulated by their own magistrates, named Duumviri, who took pride in calling themselves by the Roman title of praetors (see on Acts 16:20).

**And we were staying in this city for some days** - How long Luke does not tell us, but **days** not weeks or months, probably the **days** preceding the Sabbath described in Acts 16:13.

Paul would later tell the church at Philippi that they were citizens of another city. They had been called out from this world, saved by the grace of God, and sent back into the world to impact the world for Jesus, "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ." (Philippians 3:20)

As **Spurgeon** say they were "Waiting to know what they were to do. In God's work, we are not to go on in blundering haste. Sometimes, a little waiting may be good for us; and by waiting, we may find out the true path of success."

**Were staying** (tarrying)(1304)(**diatribo** from **dia** = through or intensifier + **tribo** = to wear, to spend; English **diatribe** = an abusive speech) literally means to rub away, to rub through, to wear away, to consume by rubbing. In the NT spoken only of TIME meaning to spend or pass time in a place, to stay, remain, tarry (Jn 3:22 = Jesus "was spending time with" His disciples, Acts 15:35 = "Paul and Barnabas stayed in Antioch"). Two uses in the Septuagint - Lev. 14:8; Jer. 35:7.

Most of the uses are by Luke - Jn. 3:22; Acts 12:19; Acts 14:3; Acts 14:28; Acts 15:35; Acts 16:12; Acts 20:6; Acts 25:6; Acts 25:14

**Gilbrant** - Septuagint Usage - The more common classical meaning is found in the Septuagint at Leviticus 14:8; the unclean individual must "spend" 7 days outside his or her own residence. Tobit, one of the apocryphal writings of the Septuagint, used diatribō in its rare sense of "rub" (Tobit 11:8,12). Sometimes diatribō is in reference to a locality rather than time. "Nicanor stayed on in Jerusalem" (2 Maccabees 14:23; cf. Judith 10:2; the RSV translates diatribō "lived").

**Liddell-Scott** - to rub between, rub hard, rub away, consume, waste, to perish utterly, Hdt. II. to spend time, to waste time, pass it away, make no more delay, to pass all one's time there, to go on talking, Id.: -hence, to employ oneself on or in a thing, to lose time, delay, II., to lose time on the way, to put off by delay, to thwart, hinder a thing, put them off in the matter of her wedding,

**Acts 16:13 And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled.**

KJV 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.

NET Acts 16:13 On the Sabbath day we went outside the city gate to the side of the river, where we thought there would be a place of prayer, and we sat down and began to speak to the women who had assembled there.

GNT Acts 16:13 τ τε μ ρ τ ν σαββ των ξ λθομεν ξω τ ς π λης παρ ποταμ ν ο νομ ζομεν προσευχ ν ε ναι, κα καθ σαντες λαλο μεν τα ς συνελθο σαις γυναιξ ν.

NLT Acts 16:13 On the Sabbath we went a little way outside the city to a riverbank, where we thought people would be meeting for prayer, and we sat down to speak with some women who had gathered there.

ESV Acts 16:13 And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together.

CSB Acts 16:13 On the Sabbath day we went outside the city gate by the river, where we thought there was a place of prayer. We sat down and spoke to the women gathered there.

NIV Acts 16:13 On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there.

- **on the Sabbath day** Ac 13:14,42 17:2 18:4 20:7
- **where we were supposing:** Lu 13:10
- **and we sat down** : Ac 16:6 21:5 Mt 5:1,2 13:2 Lu 4:20,21 Joh 8:2
- **and began speaking to the women who had assembled:** Mk 16:15 Ga 3:28 Col 1:23
- Sir William Ramsay - [Acts 16:13 \(St Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen\)](#)
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries
- 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.

## SABBATH BUT NO SYNAGOGUE

**And on the Sabbath day** - **Sabbath** (4521) (**sabbaton** from **shabath** - H7676 = to cease from work, intermission) Jewish Sabbath was the 7th day of week and was kept originally by a total cessation from all labor as even the kindling of a fire, but apparently without any public solemnities except an addition to the daily sacrifice in the tabernacle and the changing of the shewbread (Ex 20:8, 31:13; Lv 24:8; Nu 15:32, 28:9). The custom of reading the Scriptures in public assemblies and synagogues appears to have been introduced after the exile (cf. Neh 8; Lu 4:16). But it is clear that there is no synagogue or Paul would have made a beeline for it.

**We went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer-** Paul normally went first to a local synagogue when he arrived in a new city, but apparently there was none in Philippi. Ten Jewish men who were heads of their household was required to constitute a synagogue, suggesting that Philippi must have had a relatively small Jewish population. This location would have been like an "informal synagogue."

**F F Bruce** - Had there been ten Jewish men, they would have sufficed to constitute a synagogue. No number of women would compensate for the absence of even one man necessary to make up the quorum of ten. (NICNT-Acts)

**Spurgeon** - Some quiet corner, where good people were wont to gather by the brook to pray. This was probably the first religious meeting of Christians that was ever held in Europe. It is remarkable that it was a prayer-meeting, a prayer-meeting attended by women, a prayer-meeting to which two ministers came, and preached the gospel to the women who resorted thither. To be able to be present at a prayer-meeting ought always to be reckoned a great privilege to all of us who are Christians. In this way the gospel first came to us; in this way the gospel will be best preserved to us; and in this way we may best obtain guidance from God as to how we may carry the gospel to others.

**Supposing** (thinking) (3543) (**nomizo** from **nomos** = law, custom) means to think or believe something without being fully settled in mind or opinion. The idea is as we would say today "they made an educated guess." As **Swindoll** explains **nomizo** "basically means "to think," "to believe," or "to consider" and can be more or less definite, but it's frequently used in the sense of "common knowledge." For example, it's common knowledge that movie theaters serve popcorn. It's not a rule, but everyone knows. In the same way, everyone knew where Jews in Philippi gathered for prayer each Sabbath. Of course, "everyone" included Luke, who knew the city well." (Ibid)

**Vincent** on a **place of prayer** - The number of Jews in Philippi was small, since it was a military and not a mercantile city; consequently there was no synagogue, but only a proseucha, or praying-place, a slight structure, and often open to the sky. It was

outside the gate, for the sake of retirement, and near a stream, because of the ablutions connected with the worship.

**Prayer** (4335)(**proseuche** from **pros** = toward or immediately before + **euchomai** = to pray or vow) is the more general word for prayer and is used only of prayer to God. The prefix **pros** would convey the sense of being immediately before Him and hence the ideas of adoration, devotion, and worship. The basic idea is to bring something, and in prayer this pertains to bringing up prayer requests. In early Greek culture an offering was brought with a prayer that it be accepted. Later the idea was changed slightly, so that the thing brought to God was a prayer. In later Greek, prayers appealed to God for His presence.

**Wiersbe** quips "Paul had seen a man in the vision at Troas, but here he was ministering to a group of women! 'It is better that the words of the Law be burned than be delivered to a woman!' said the rabbis; but that was no longer Paul's philosophy. He had been obedient and the Lord had gone before to prepare the way. ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**Bruce** adds that "Had there been ten Jewish men, they would have sufficed to constitute a synagogue. No number of women would compensate for the absence of even one man necessary to make up the quorum of ten.

### Resources Related to Prayer

- [Colossians 1:9 Commentary](#)
- [Colossians 4:12 Commentary](#)
- [Devotional on Prayer](#)
- [Guide to Praying for Missionaries](#)
- [Pithy Prayer Phrases](#)
- [Prayer - Greek Words for Prayer](#)
- [Prayer Devotionals and Illustrations](#)
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- [Prayer Quotes, Devotionals and Illustrations](#)
- [Praying His Word](#)
- [Praying in the Spirit](#)
- [Spurgeon's Gems on Prayer](#)

**We sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled** - **Began speaking** is in the [imperfect tense](#), over and over. To take a seated position was the normal posture for teaching (cf Mt 5:1, 13:2, Lk 4:20). Contrary to what many people say about Paul, he was not a male chauvinist as he is often labeled because of his teaching on women (e.g., 1 Ti 2:12, etc). Paul was a former Pharisee which shows the transforming power of the Gospel, because Pharisees would not condescend to teach a woman. Not to mention that a regular prayer of these biased legalists was to thank God they were neither Gentiles, slaves or women! Even the secular Greek/Roman culture did not treat women with the respect they deserve as those souls created in the image of God! For Paul's attitude toward women see Phoebe (Ro 16:1, cf Ro 16:3, Php 4:2-3 = "women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel").

Notice the phrase **the women who had assembled** indicates there were no men!

**Assembled** (4905)(**sunerchomai** from **sun** = with, together + **erchomai** = to come) means to get together for a specific purpose in this case to pray and read the Old Testament law.

**Acts 16:14 A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.**

KJV 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.

NET Acts 16:14 A woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, a God-fearing woman, listened to us. The Lord opened her heart to respond to what Paul was saying.

GNT Acts 16:14 κα τις γυν ν μαπι Λυδ α, πορφυρ πωλις π λεως Θυατε ρων σεβομ νη τ ν θε ν, κουεν, ς κ ριος δι νοιξεν τ ν καρδ αν προσ χειν το ς λαλουμ νοις π το Πα λου.

NLT Acts 16:14 One of them was Lydia from Thyatira, a merchant of expensive purple cloth, who worshiped

God. As she listened to us, the Lord opened her heart, and she accepted what Paul was saying.

ESV Acts 16:14 One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.

CSB Acts 16:14 A woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God, was listening. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was spoken by Paul.

NIV Acts 16:14 One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message.

NAB Acts 16:14 One of them, a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth, from the city of Thyatira, a worshiper of God, listened, and the Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what Paul was saying.

NKJ Acts 16:14 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.

NJB Acts 16:14 One of these women was called Lydia, a woman from the town of Thyatira who was in the purple-dye trade, and who revered God. She listened to us, and the Lord opened her heart to accept what Paul was saying.

GWN Acts 16:14 A woman named Lydia was present. She was a convert to Judaism from the city of Thyatira and sold purple dye for a living. She was listening because the Lord made her willing to pay attention to what Paul said.

NRS Acts 16:14 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.

YLT Acts 16:14 and a certain woman, by name Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, worshipping God, was hearing, whose heart the Lord did open to attend to the things spoken by Paul;

- **Lydia** : Ac 16:40
- **Thyatira** : Rev 1:11 2:18-24
- **worshipper** : Ac 8:27 10:2 18:7 Joh 12:20
- **Opened her heart** - Ac 11:21 Ps 110:3 Song 5:4 Isa 50:5 Lu 24:45 Joh 6:44,45 Ro 9:16 1Co 3:6,7 2Co 3:14-16 4:4-6 Eph 1:17,18 Php 2:13 Jas 1:16,17 Rev 3:7,20
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GOD ALONE OPENS HEARTS TO BELIEVE

**And a certain woman named Lydia** - **Lydia** apparently holds the distinction as the first European Christian! There goes male [chauvinism](#)! I get it because my wife came to Christ before I did and then enlisted a group of women to pray for almost one year until the Spirit swept me into the Kingdom of God. **Lydia** may have been named after [the land of Lydia](#), though Lydia is a common female name. When Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians (about 10 years later) he did not mention **Lydia** who may have died meanwhile. Lydia was certainly not Paul's wife.

**Vincent** on **Lydia**. An adjective: the Lydian; but as Lydia was a common name among the Greeks and Romans, it does not follow that she was named from her native country.

City of Thyatira  
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**From the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics**- [Thyatira](#) (plural form like Philippi) was famous for its purple dyes as old as Homer (Iliad) and had a guild of dyers as inscriptions show (see Vincent's note below). There was a great demand for **purple fabric** as it was used on the [official toga](#) at Rome and in Roman colonies. ([See color picture](#)). ([Purple dye](#)).

**Thyatira** was one of the seven churches ([see map](#)) Jesus personally addressed in Revelation Rev 2:18-29 (see comments). Ironically these words were written about 40 years after Lydia's encounter here in Acts 16 and described another woman in Thyatira named Jezebel, the antithesis of Lydia!

**Vincent** - The district of Lydia, and the city of Thyatira in particular, were famous for purple dyes. So Homer: "As when some Carian or Maeonian\* dame ,Tinges with **purple** the white ivory, To form a trapping for the cheeks of steeds."Iliad, iv., 141." (From) An inscription found in the ruins of Thyatira relates to the guild of dyers.

**A worshiper of God** - Like Cornelius (Acts 10:2), she was a God-fearer or Gentile but was not a full Jewish proselyte. Nevertheless she openly worshiped with the Jews and clearly she was seeking truth.

**Worshiper** (4576) (**sebomai**, from **sébas** = reverential awe <> stem **seb** originally = "to fall back before", sacred, awe) means to hold in high esteem, show reverence or awe (veneration) by someone who is devout. Always in the middle voice indicating of the personal involvement in the veneration. *Sebomai* stresses the *outward* (religious) expression of inner piety. Homer uses falling back in the sense of shrinking from. The bodily movement expressed an inner attitude of respect, of being impressed by something great and lofty. The subjects might be gods or men, the objects gods, men or things. The idea of shrinking from the gods leads to the sense of awe or reverence, first in the general form of respect, then in the more specifically religious form of veneration (regarding with reverential respect or with admiring deference & implies a holding as holy or sacrosanct because of character, association, or age). *Sebomai* refers to twisted (confused) worship when the devout person operates from the wrong premises (Acts 19:27 - goddess Artemis).

**Sebomai** then means to live a lifestyle of godliness before others. You may say you worshiped God on Sunday. What was Monday like? Did you give in to the pagan darkness around you or did you express the fact that you are serving a higher King than the one who is over this world of darkness and you are willing to take the heat because you are worshiping by your life. First, RECOGNITION. Then, the LIFESTYLE. Finally, the WORSHIP.

This word group derives from the Hellenistic milieu, where it came to mean a reverent and wondering awe at the lofty and pure world of the divine; as such, it is a typical expression of Greek piety. These words have no direct Hebrew equivalent: they are generally avoided in the LXX and the Pseudepigrapha (When used there it expresses worship of the one true God in contrast to false gods), occurring most frequently in those works composed in Greek (esp 4 Maccabees).

**Gilbrant** - In both the active and middle forms this verb denotes the act of "worshipping, revering," or "the sense of awe, fear," usually in a religious sense. Nonetheless, it is also applied to esteemed persons such as parents (*Liddell-Scott*). Essentially, though, the middle form means "to worship, fear" when directed to a deity or "to revere, respect, honor" when directed to an individual (*ibid.*). The religious connotations tend to dominate. (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

**Sebomai** - Matt. 15:9; Mk. 7:7; Acts 13:43; Acts 13:50; Acts 16:14; Acts 17:4; Acts 17:17; Acts 18:7; Acts 18:13; Acts 19:27

**Sebomai** in the **Septuagint** - Jos. 4:24; Jos. 22:25; Jos. 24:33; Job 1:9; Isa. 29:13; Isa. 66:14; Jon. 1:9;

**John MacArthur** - Her conversion, and those of Cornelius and the Ethiopian eunuch, illustrate an important principle. An often-asked question about evangelism concerns the fate of those who never hear the gospel. Lydia's conversion shows that God will reveal the fullness of the gospel to those whom He causes to honestly seek Him. In John 6:37, Jesus said, "All that the Father gives Me shall come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will certainly not cast out." God will never turn away the seeking heart. Not only was Lydia seeking, but she also **was listening** to the gospel proclaimed by Paul. Many **hear** the sound of the life-giving message preached without really **listening** to it. They are like Paul's companions on the Damascus Road, who, although they heard its sound, "did not understand the voice of the One who was speaking" (Acts 22:9). The Lord Jesus Christ condemned those who heard without listening. In response to His disciples' query about why He spoke in parables (Matt. 13:11-17). In John 8:43-45, Jesus gave the reason people fail to listen to His Word. Lydia was not like them; she listened with faith to the saving gospel. (*Ibid*)

**Was listening** - The [imperfect tense](#) pictures her as listening, really listening and she kept it up, listening to each of these new and strange preachers. Paul would say a word and she would "grab it" so to speak. It is fascinating that Lydia was "**listening**" just like Mary who was seated at the Lord's feet "**listening** (also [imperfect tense](#)) to His word." (Lk 10:39+). The [imperfect tense](#) is also used of "the prisoners (who) were **listening** to" Paul and Silas praying and singing in Acts 16:25+.

**Warren Wiersbe** wrote, "We must not conclude that because God opened Lydia's heart, Lydia's part in her conversion was entirely passive. She listened attentively to the Word, and it is the Word that brings the sinner to the Savior. The same God who ordained the end, Lydia's salvation, also ordained the means to the end, Paul's witness of Jesus Christ."

**And the Lord opened her heart** - The Lord thoroughly, totally opened her mind by dividing the mind that was previously closed and causing her to understand spiritual truths otherwise hidden to the natural mind. (cf Lu 24:31, 45+). Repentance is a gift to undeserving sinners granted by a merciful, kind God [Ro 2:4+ Acts 5:31+, Acts 11:18+] This verse is clear proof of the [sovereignty of God](#) in salvation.

**THOUGHT** - This is good news for every disciple, especially those of us who are shy or do not feel equipped

to adequately share the Gospel. Guess what? The results do not depend on us! (cf 2 Cor 3:5-6+, Zech 4:6, John 6:63, etc) We are simply to be "farmers" sowing seeds of God's Good News (cf Ps 126:5, 6, Da 12:3+, Eccl 11:1, 6, Pr 11:18b, 1 Cor 9:6, Mt 9:37, 38, Lk 10:2+). It is not about "getting it right" or making the perfect presentation. It is simply about sowing a few Gospel seeds - like writing out Acts 16:31<sub>±</sub> on the receipt of the restaurant bill (after you have left a generous trip), offering to pray for your waiter or waitress in the Name of Jesus, simply saying something like "I am not ashamed of the Gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes..." (Ro 1:16<sub>±</sub>). Be encouraged. Be bold. Be prepared to present a Word in season and out of season (2 Ti 4:2<sub>±</sub>)! **C H Spurgeon** the greatest preacher in modern times was saved by a word from a man whose presentation was far from perfect, a man who was not even a preacher but who stood up because the preacher was prevented from coming by a violent snowstorm ([God's providence](#)). And guess what this simple unlearned man said? He read one verse from Isaiah 45:22KJV "**Look** (a command) unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." That is all it took for God's Spirit to open the heart of C H Spurgeon, and as they say "The rest is history!" So never underestimate the power of God's Word and God's Spirit to take a word you have spoke and birth a man or woman into the kingdom of God....and you never know when it might be a "C H Spurgeon!" (See [C.H.Spurgeon's Testimony](#))

When **Lydia** heard the gospel, the Spirit of God **opened her heart** and she believed--another example where **divine election** and **human responsibility** are naturally juxtaposed. Salvation is a work God must do in all who believe, because as Jesus said, "No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up on the last day. (John 6:44).

**To open the heart** indicates that the Lord caused her to understand (BAGD; EDNT) or that He caused her to have an open mind :with a willingness to learn and evaluate fairly." (New Linguistic & Exegetical Key to the Greek New Testament )

**Opened** ([1272](#))(**dianoigo** from **dia** = through, between, used here as an intensive + **anoigo** = to open, remove that which obstructs) means to open completely (wide, like "double folding doors" or as when Stephen in his last moments before martyrdom saw "the heavens **opened up**" Acts 7:56) and can speak of opening to one's understanding what is otherwise hidden to their intellect. To open the sense of Scripture and thus to *explain* the Scripture. To thoroughly disclose or cause one to thoroughly understand. Albert Barnes says **dianoigo** "means to explain what is concealed or obscure." **Dianoigo** is one of those truly "supernatural" words, a word that speaks of the Spirit's enabling power! It is used by Mark to describe the miraculous giving of hearing by Jesus (Mk 7:34, 32-33). The remainder of the NT uses are by Dr. Luke to describe the opening of the womb (context = miraculous birth of Jesus) (Lk 2:23+), the supernatural opening of one's (spiritual) eyes ("the eyes of our heart") to recognize the Messiah (Lk 24:31+), the opening of one's mind to Scriptural truth, explaining the truth, (and unless this occurs, we cannot truly understand it naturally, because it is supernatural!) (Lk 24:45+, cp Lk 24:32+), the opening of heaven to Stephen so that he could see Jesus (Acts 7:56+), the supernatural opening of Lydia's heart to receive the Gospel preached by Paul (Acts 16:14) We see an OT parallel when Elisha prayed for his servant's (spiritual) eyes to be opened and given "supernatural vision." (2 Ki 6:17) Note that the idiomatic phrase "a male that **opens** the womb" (Lk 2:23+) speaks of the first-born male.

**THOUGHT** - Dear pastor, Paul's practice necessitates that first of all we preach and teach the Scriptures with the mindset of the Reformers - "Sola Scriptura!" As we work through verse by verse, our "Enabler," the Holy Spirit, will teach us as we teach others, opening individual passages and words as to their meaning and their practical application. Every teacher of spiritual truth must recognize that whereas he may teach the Word of God to others and seek to help them apply it to their lives, only God Himself can open the pupils' spiritual eyes (the "pupils" of the pupil, so to speak) and thus receptive to the truth. Read Mt 11:27.

**John Trapp** says "Man's heart is naturally locked up and barricaded against God, till he, by his mighty Spirit, make forcible entrance, beating the devil out of his trenches, 2 Cor 10:4 (cf what the devil does when the Word is sown - Lk 8:5, 10-12+)."

Jesus had thoroughly, totally opened the minds of the two on the road to Emmaus by "dividing" their mind that was was previously closed and the Word that was previously closed and causing them to understand spiritual truths otherwise hidden to the natural mind (Lk 24:32) and He did the same for His disciples (Lk 24:45 ) and for Lydia's heart Acts 16:14. Paul speaking but it was the power of Acts 1:8.

**Bob Utley** - The Bible is divine revelation, not human discovery. Spiritual truth is a gift from God to blinded, sinful humanity.

In the **Septuagint (Lxx)**, **dianoigo** is used to describe Sheol "opening wide" it's mouth (a dramatic picture of it being unavoidable or inescapable!) or of men "opening wide" their mouth to speak against the Jews (Lam 2:16, 3:46), of Ezekiel's spiritual feeding (Ezek 3:2), of "gates of rivers" opened to flood and destroy (Nah 2:6), of God opening His eyes to smite Judah's enemies (Zech 12:4), of a (supernatural) fountain opened "in that day" (the **Millennium**), a fountain "for sin and impurity." (Zech 13:1+)

**Roy Zuck** - **Dianoigo** means "to open," and was the word used by our Lord when He healed a deaf man's ears (Mark 7:34). In a

more figurative sense, this verb is used of the opening of one's eyes, mind, and heart so the person may understand spiritual truths. This stresses the divine element essential in Bible teaching. Only Christ could open the eyes of the Emmaus disciples so they would know that He was the One with them (Luke 24:31). Only Christ could open the Scriptures to them so they would appreciate them and know their meaning (Luke 24:32). Only Christ could open the minds of His disciples so they could understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:45). Only God could open the heart of Lydia, that is, "rouse in (her) the faculty of understanding or the desire of learning." **Every teacher of spiritual truth must recognize that whereas he may apply the Word of God to others and seek to help them apply it to their lives, only God Himself can make the pupils' hearts open or receptive to the truth.** (Bib. Sac. Vol. 122, No. 486, p 157).

**A T Robertson** - Opening the Scriptures, Luke means, as made plain by the mission and message of Jesus, the same word (dianoigō) used by him of the interpretation of the Scriptures by Jesus (Luke 24:32) and of the opening of the mind of the disciples also by Jesus (Luke 24:45) and of the opening of Lydia's heart by the Lord (Acts 16:14). One cannot refrain from saying that such exposition of the Scriptures as Jesus and Paul gave would lead to more opening of mind and heart. ([Acts 17 - Word Pictures in the New Testament](#))

**Dianoigo** was used occasionally in secular authors from Plato, et al, meaning to open by dividing or drawing asunder (dia), to open thoroughly (what had been closed);

**Dianoigo** - 8x in 8v - translated in NAS - explaining(2), opened(5), opens(1).

Mark 7:34 and looking up to heaven with a deep sigh, He said to him (to the deaf man - Mk 7:32-33), "**Ephphatha!**" that is, "**Be opened** (aorist active imperative)!"

Luke 2:23+ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "EVERY firstborn MALE THAT **OPENS** THE WOMB SHALL BE CALLED HOLY TO THE LORD "),

**Comment:** **Dianoigo** is used somewhat literally because the uterus has to "open" (the cervix has to dilate) in order to allow passage through the birth canal for the newborn male, specifically the firstborn male.

Luke 24:31+ Then their eyes were **opened** (**passive voice** = the "divine" passive = God did it) and they recognized Him (**Ed: Note that this is a clear reversal of their spiritual state in** Lk 24:16!; and He vanished from their sight. **32** They said to one another, "Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was **explaining** (Note [imperfect tense](#) = **over and over Jesus was explaining - what a teaching session this must have been!**) the Scriptures to us?"

Luke 24:45+ Then He **opened** (**dianoigo** - aorist active indicative) their minds to understand (**suniami** = put the pieces together so to speak, make sense out of) the Scriptures,

**Comment** - See Pastor Tim Keller's sermon Jesus As Prophet-part 2 - Understanding Jesus in 1994 in which he speaks of **dianoigo** to describe **spiritual illumination**

Acts 7:56+ and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens **opened up** (**Note: Perfect tense = indicates the state or condition, "standing open."** - Stephen saw the heavens opened and they remained open! And He saw Jesus Who otherwise is depicted as seated, instead standing to give His choice servant "praise, glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ" after his momentary trial - see 1Pe 1:6-7-**note**. What a welcome home after being stoned to death!) and the Son of Man **standing** at the right hand of God (cp Lk 22:69, Col 3:1-**note**, Heb 10:11-12-**note**, Heb 12:2-**note**)."

Acts 16:14 A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord **opened** her heart (~ her soul) to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

Acts 17:3+ (**Context** - Acts 17:1-2 - "He reasoned with them from the Scriptures" - **this refers not to the NT but the OT - could you explain Jesus to others from JUST the Old Testament?**) **explaining** and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ."

**Comment:** The implication of Paul's explaining is that it was accomplished supernaturally, not naturally, a good pattern for all who would seek to proclaim the Living Word in **power** and in the **Spirit** (cp this "dynamic" [**dunamis**] combination in 1Thes 1:5-**note**).

**Dianoigo** - 34x in 32v in the Septuagint

Genesis 3:5+ "**(Satan is speaking)** For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes **will be opened** (Lxx = dianoigo), and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."...7 Then the eyes of both of them **were**



**opened**, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loin coverings.

Exodus 13:2 "Sanctify to Me every firstborn, the first offspring (**Lxx = dianoigo** - idiom [+ metra = womb] "opening the womb" = first-born) of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and beast; it belongs to Me."

12 you shall devote to the LORD the first offspring (**Lxx = dianoigo** - idiom [+ metra = womb] "opening the womb" = first-born) of every womb, and the first offspring (**Lxx = dianoigo** - idiom [+ metra = womb] "opening the womb" = first-born) of every beast that you own; the males belong to the LORD. 13 "But every first offspring (**Lxx = dianoigo** - idiom [+ metra = womb] = "opening the womb" = first-born) of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb, but if you do not redeem it, then you shall break its neck; and every firstborn of man among your sons you shall redeem.

15 "It came about, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the LORD killed every firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore, I sacrifice to the LORD the males, the first offspring **Lxx = dianoigo** - idiom [+ metra = womb] = "opening the womb" = first-born) of every womb, but every firstborn of my sons I redeem.'

Exodus 34:19 "The first offspring **Lxx = dianoigo** - idiom [+ metra = womb] = "opening the womb" = first-born) from every womb belongs to Me, and all your male livestock, the first offspring from cattle and sheep.

Numbers 3:12 "Now, behold, I have taken the Levites from among the sons of Israel instead of every firstborn, the first issue **Lxx = dianoigo** - idiom [+ metra = womb] = "opening the womb" = first-born) of the womb among the sons of Israel. So the Levites shall be Mine.

Numbers 8:16 for they are wholly given to Me from among the sons of Israel. I have taken them for Myself instead of every first issue **Lxx = dianoigo** - idiom [+ metra = womb] = "opening the womb" = first-born) of the womb, the firstborn of all the sons of Israel.

Numbers 18:15 "Every first issue **Lxx = dianoigo** - idiom [+ metra = womb] = "opening the womb" = first-born) of the womb of all flesh, whether man or animal, which they offer to the LORD, shall be yours; nevertheless the firstborn of man you shall surely redeem, and the firstborn of unclean animals you shall redeem.

1 Kings 4:20 Judah and Israel were as numerous as the sand that is on the seashore in abundance; they were eating and drinking and rejoicing.

2 Kings 6:17 Then Elisha prayed and said, "O LORD, I pray, **open** (Lxx = dianoigo) his eyes that he may see." And the LORD **opened** (Lxx = dianoigo - **Perhaps this is a prayer we dare pray for ourselves and those for whom we are called to intercede - that the Spirit would open eyes to see supernaturally God's truth which is closed to natural vision!**) the servant's eyes and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

2 Kings 6:20 When they had come into Samaria, Elisha said, "O LORD, **open** the eyes of these men, that they may see." So the LORD opened their eyes and they saw; and behold, they were in the midst of Samaria.

Job 27:19 "He lies down rich, but never again; He **opens** his eyes, and it is no longer.

Job 29:19 'My root is spread out (Lxx - dianoigo = "opened up") to the waters, And dew lies all night on my branch.

Job 38:32 "Can you **lead forth** (Lxx - dianoigo = "open up") a constellation in its season, And guide the Bear with her satellites?

Proverbs 20:13 Do not love sleep, or you will become poor; **Open** your eyes, and you will be satisfied with food.

Proverbs 31:20 She extends her hand to the poor, And she stretches out (Lxx = dianoigo = "she opens up her hands completely" - a picture of her generosity and benevolent spirit) her hands to the needy.

26 She **opens** (Lxx = dianoigo) her mouth in wisdom, And the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.

Isaiah 5:14 Therefore Sheol has enlarged its throat and **opened** its mouth without measure; And Jerusalem's splendor, her multitude, her din of revelry and the jubilant within her, descend into it.

Lamentations 2:16 All your enemies Have **opened** their mouths wide against you; They hiss and gnash their teeth. They say, "We have swallowed her up! Surely this is the day for which we waited; We have reached it,

we have seen it."

Lamentations 3:46 All our enemies have **opened** their mouths against us.

Ezekiel 3:2 So I **opened** my mouth, and He fed me this scroll.

Ezekiel 20:26 and I pronounced them unclean because of their gifts, in that they caused all their **firstborn** (**Lxx = dianoigo** - idiom [+ metra = womb] "opening the womb" = first-born) to pass through the fire so that I might make them desolate, in order that they might know that I am the LORD."

Ezekiel 21:22 "Into his right hand came the divination, 'Jerusalem,' to set battering rams, **toopen** the mouth for slaughter, to lift up the voice with a battle cry, to set battering rams against the gates, to cast up ramps, to build a siege wall.

Ezekiel 24:27 'On that day your mouth will be **opened** to him who escaped, and you will speak and be mute no longer. Thus you will be a sign to them, and they will know that I am the LORD."

Hosea 2:15 "Then I will give her her vineyards from there, And the valley of Achor as a door of hope (Lxx uses dianoigo to translate as "to open her understanding"). And she will sing there as in the days of her youth, As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.

Nahum 2:6 The gates of the rivers are **opened** And the palace is dissolved.

Habakkuk 3:14 You pierced with his own spears The head of his throngs. They stormed in to scatter us; Their exultation was like those Who devour the oppressed in secret. (Septuagint = 3:14 Thou didst cut asunder the heads of princes with amazement, they shall tremble in it; they **shall burst [dianoigo]** their bridles, they shall be as a poor man devouring in secret.)

Zechariah 11:1 **Open** your doors, O Lebanon, That a fire may feed on your cedars.

Zechariah 12:4+ "In that day," declares the LORD, "I will strike every horse with bewilderment and his rider with madness. But I will watch over the house of Judah, while I strike every horse of the peoples with blindness. (LXE In that day, saith the Lord Almighty, I will smite every horse with amazement, and his rider with madness: but **I will open** mine eyes upon the house of Juda, and I will smite all the horses of the nations with blindness.)

Zechariah 13:1+ "In that day a fountain **will be opened** for the house of David and for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, for sin and for impurity.

**to respond to the things spoken by Paul - Respond** is an interesting Greek verb for Luke to choose because it gives us the picture of Lydia continually holding her mind toward what Paul was speaking (see more below). She kept her mind centered on the things spoken by Paul whose words gripped her attention. **Spoken** is not the word for official proclamation (as of the Gospel) but here pictures a more personal conversation instead of a sermon. The Spirit of God used Paul as a vessel to win the heart of this woman to Christ. It is important to note that it was the Word which brought the sinner Lydia to the Savior Christ Jesus.

As **Jesus** promised...

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. (John 5:24+)

God's Spirit opening Lydia's heart and Lydia receiving the Word implanted which is able to save our souls is a beautiful illustration of the following passages...

For this reason we also constantly thank God that when **you received the word of God** which you heard from us, **you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God** which also **performs its work** (GOD'S PART) in **you who believe** (MEN'S PART). 14 For you, brethren, became imitators of the churches of God in Christ Jesus that are in Judea, for you also endured the same sufferings at the hands of your own countrymen, even as they did from the Jews, (1 Th 2:13+, 1 Th 2:14+)

**To respond** (pay or give attention) (4337)(**prosecho** from **pros** = before, toward + **echo** = hold) means literally to hold to, toward or before. Originally it was followed by the word "the mind" (nous) but at times "the mind" was omitted but still the idea of "the mind" was implied. To apply one's self to. To attach one's self to.

**NET Note on to respond** - Although BDAG 880 s.v. prose,cw 2.b gives the meaning '**pay attention to**' here, this could be misunderstood by the modern English reader to mean merely listening intently. The following context, however, indicates that Lydia responded positively to Paul's message, so the verb here was translated "to respond."

An interesting observation is that here we see one solitary convert, a woman, already a seeker after God, and a **native of the very area where they had been forbidden to preach!** ([See location of Thyatira](#)) And given her influence over her household, one cannot not help but think she would return as somewhat of a missionary to Thyatira! God's **ways** are so much higher than our **ways** (Isaiah 55:9). A new era had dawned for lost souls in Europe and for all women everywhere in the conversion of Lydia. Who Alone can open closed hearts but our great, omnipotent God!

#### Related Resource:

- [Tony Garland's use of this passage for a discussion comparing Calvinism and Arminianism](#)

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**Lowell Johnson** - Do you invite Jesus to be the honored guest in your home? I've known some church members who seem to leave Jesus at church when they go home. Six days a week, they have a different attitude and use a different vocabulary, but on Sunday they dress up and act holy and religious. It says something about the care and character of Peter, having his Mother-in-law living with him. Jesus doesn't just go to church with us, He makes house calls. (ED: **Doctors don't do that anymore, but the Great Physician does. Do you need a house call today? He is able!**)



"The Light of the World,"  
William Holman Hunt, 1851-56,  
Manchester City Art Gallery.

"In its heyday in the early 20th century, the painting **"The Light of the World"** (1851-53) was probably more famous than any of the works of the great masters of the Renaissance. As difficult as it is to imagine today, millions of people around the world flocked to see what was known as the **"SERMON IN A FRAME."** The allegorical painting that captured the imagination of so many was created by the English artist William Holman Hunt, who began the work at the age of 21 and finished it when he was 29. The painting illustrates the biblical passage in Revelation 3:20<sup>±</sup>:

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, [then] I will enter his house and dine with him, and he with Me."

Jesus, carrying a lantern, is depicted knocking at a door with no handle on the outside. The door is overgrown with weeds, and the nails and hinges are rusted, implying that the door has never been opened. **The message:** it is up to the person on the other side of the door to let Jesus in....The painting went on a world tour from 1905 to 1907, visiting the hometowns of millions of people in Canada, South Africa, and beyond. On its tour of Australia, it's estimated that 4/5 of the population of the country saw it. The industrialist Charles Booth purchased the painting from Hunt and Hughes and donated it to St. Paul's Cathedral in London where it hangs today. According to St. Paul's, the painting is "the most traveled art work in history." ([Aleteia](#))

**Robert Munger** wrote a famous booklet [My Heart Christ's Home](#) (1951) - Here is a brief excerpt "Without question one of the most remarkable Christian doctrines is that Jesus Christ Himself through the presence of the Holy Spirit will actually enter a heart, settle down and be at **home** there. Christ will make the human heart His abode." (Read Jn 14:23, cf Col 1:27b<sup>±</sup>)

**THOUGHT** - Hunt's famous picture, Munger's classic booklet and John's quote from Jesus beg the question

dear reader "Have you opened your heart to let Jesus come in that He might abide in you for the rest of eternity?" If not, I pray God opens your heart today to respond to the "knock" of Jesus. Yes, God's Spirit must lead you to repentance and faith, but you are responsibility to make a choice of your will to invite the Creator of the universe into your heart by grace through faith (Eph 2:8-9+). Luke records that "A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart (GOD'S PART) to respond (LYDIA'S PART) to the things spoken by Paul." (Acts 16:14+)

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**A. W. Tozer** wrote that "Probably the hardest thought of all for our natural egotism to entertain is that God does not need our help. We commonly represent Him as a busy, eager, somewhat frustrated Father hurrying about seeking help to carry out His benevolent plan to bring peace and salvation to the world; but as said the Lady Julian, "I saw truly that God doeth all-thing, be it never so little." The God who worketh all things surely needs no help and no helpers. Too many missionary appeals are based upon this fancied frustration of Almighty God. An effective speaker can easily excite pity in his hearers, not only for the heathen but for the God who has tried so hard and so long to save them and has failed for want of support. I fear that thousands of young persons enter Christian service from no higher motive than to help deliver God from the embarrassing situation His love has gotten Him into and His limited abilities seem unable to get Him out of. ([The Knowledge of the Holy - scroll down to page 25](#))

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**Matt Chandler** of the first member of the church at Philippi - Lydia is from the city of Thyatira. This tells us that she is likely ethnically Asian. But she has a house in Philippi. So this tells us that economically she's very wealthy. Both Thyatira and Philippi are major metropolitan areas. The portrait we see developing of Lydia is that of a woman who's in the fashion industry—think "fashionista"—essentially the CEO of her own fashion empire. Thinking in today's terms, she'd have a house in Los Angeles, a house in New York, and a house in Paris. This is a woman who has done very, very well for herself.

But Lydia is also what the Bible calls a God-fearer. Here's what that means: She has rejected paganism. She has rejected polytheism. She does not believe that there are dozens of gods—that there's a god of the wind, a god of the rain, a god of the purple cloth, or a god of the fashion world. She's worshipping the Father, not Prada. Lydia has come to believe that there is one God. She listens to the teaching of the Jews, trying to grasp what it means to live a God-fearing life; she wants to live out her faith in the context of her family and her business.

This is an important point in the story of Lydia's conversion: she is an intellect and, by all indications, a seeker. She has gathered with a group of women to hear the Scriptures explained. Lydia, by listening to the Torah, knows that God gave His people the law. She knows that God gave the Ten Commandments. She understands that she does some of those things well, but she also understands that she's broken some of those laws and commandments too. She likely has some concept of the need for atonement. But without the good news of Jesus, she's confused. It is into this setting that Paul shows up and starts to fill in the spiritual framework through which Lydia has operated up to this point.

This is like a Tuesday-morning women's Bible study! This is like a bunch of women doing a Hebrew precepts study, and Paul shows up, says, "Hold on a second," and presses pause. Paul begins to explain to the women's Bible study that God gave us the law to reveal that we all have fallen short of God's glory and that atonement was made only by Christ's work on the cross.

Paul engages Lydia's reason, engages her intellect—and it is through the impartation of this knowledge that she becomes a believer in Christ. In fact, she immediately believes and gets baptized, her whole household gets saved and baptized, and then she invites Paul to stay in her home. I'm guessing she's got a nice joint. For Paul the bi-vocational missionary and blue-collar tent maker, this is a pretty sweet deal. His time in Philippi is a refreshing respite from the glorious grind of faithfulness to the gospel call. (To Live is Christ, To Die is Gain)

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**C H Spurgeon - Morning and Evening** - In Lydia's conversion there are many points of interest. It was brought about by providential circumstances. She was a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, but just at the right time for hearing Paul we find her at Philippi; providence, which is the handmaid of grace, led her to the right spot. Again, grace was preparing her soul for the blessing—grace preparing for grace. She did not know the Saviour, but as a Jewess (**Ed note:** most commentators feel she was not Jewish but was a Gentile seeker of God), she knew many truths which were excellent stepping-stones to a knowledge of Jesus. Her conversion took place in the use of the means. On the Sabbath she went when prayer was wont to be made, and there prayer was heard. Never neglect the means of grace; God may bless us when we are not in his house, but we have the greater reason to hope that he will when we are in communion with his saints.

Observe the words, "Whose heart the Lord opened." She did not open her own heart. Her prayers did not do it; Paul did not do it. The Lord himself must open the heart, to receive the things which make for our peace. He alone can put the key into the hole of the door and open it, and get admittance for himself. He is the heart's master as he is the heart's maker.

The first outward evidence of the opened heart was obedience. As soon as Lydia had believed in Jesus, she was baptized. It is a sweet sign of a humble and broken heart, when the child of God is willing to obey a command which is not essential to his salvation, which is not forced upon him by a selfish fear of condemnation, but is a simple act of obedience and of communion with his Master.

The next evidence was love, manifesting itself in acts of grateful kindness to the apostles. Love to the saints has ever been a mark of the true convert. Those who do nothing for Christ or his church, give but sorry evidence of an "opened" heart. Lord, evermore give me an opened heart. (Morning and Evening - Evening Devotional, December 10)

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**Richard Hawker - Whose heart the Lord opened.—Acts 16:14.**

It is always blessed to trace mercies to their source! And blessed when, through grace, we are enabled to give God his glory, and not put down to man's merit what wholly originates in God's grace. The opening of the heart can only be the province of him that made it. Renewing work, as well as creating work, is his. He that hath the key of David, is he alone "that openeth, and none shutteth; and shutteth, and none openeth." What a beautiful illustration the Holy Ghost gives the Church of this precious truth, in the instance of this woman, whose heart the Lord opened! We are told in her history, that she was of the city of Thyatira, a place remote from Philippi, where this sovereign act of mercy was shown her. How long she had remained in a state of unrenewed nature, or what predisposing providence it was that brought her to Philippi, with other circumstances which we might have thought interesting to inquire after, we are not informed; the grand feature in her character is summed up in this short, but blessed account, "whose heart the Lord opened." The Holy Ghost hath indeed recorded her name and occupation, by way of making this testimony concerning her: "A certain woman, named Lydia, a seller of purple." Behold, my soul! what blessed instruction ariseth out of it, for thy evening's meditation. What honourable mention is made of her, from this one blessed act, which the Lord wrought upon her! Poor and inconsiderable as she was in herself, small and of no reputation, yet her name is in the book of life! Pause, and contemplate the rich mercy which the Lord hath also accomplished in thee. Hath not he that opened Lydia's heart opened thine? And is it not his province also that first opened it by his grace, to keep it open by the daily influences of his Holy Spirit? Is it not his to renew, to refresh, to comfort, to strengthen, and to confirm unto the end? And wilt thou not, my soul, with the close of day, and the opening of the morning, look up for these precious manifestations? Lord! do thou open mine eyes, mine heart, my whole soul, to the enjoyment of these gracious renewed visits of thy love: and let no night or morning pass, without receiving fresh and increasing evidences from my Lord, that Christ hath both opened my heart, and is "formed in my heart the hope of glory!"

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**F B Meyer writes... Acts 16:14, 27 - A certain woman named Lydia.... The Keeper of the prison.**

These are typical cases, put here in juxtaposition for the teaching and comfort of believers in every age. Each of them needed Christ, and each was brought into his true light; but each came in a different way. Lydia's heart opened as a flower beneath the touch of the sun, so gradually and imperceptibly that it was impossible to say the precise moment of her new life. The jailer came to Christ suddenly, startlingly, amid the crash of an earthquake. The one was drawn by love; the other driven by fear. A distinguished missionary says, "The Lord awakened me with a kiss" — it was so that Lydia's heart was won. Another tells us that the Lord sprang on him like a lion — it was thus with the jailer.

**Lydia.** — Do not always be looking out for signs and manifestations, for marked experiences. We do not notice the lines of longitude and latitude as we cross the ocean of life. Without knowing it, your character may be in the process of transfiguration. By insensible gradations the work of God may be proceeding in your heart. The tide is rising daily by tiny wavelets that appear to recede as fast as they advance. Do not measure progress by experiences; only be yielded to God, and let Him do his will.

**The Jailer.** — Do not undervalue the influence of fear. There are some natures that never will be awakened unless they are startled by being brought face to face with the consequences of sin. If men will not come by the highest motives, be thankful that they come by any. Remember it is not belief about Christ, about his death or resurrection, but trust in Him as a living Person, that saves from the power and penalty of sin. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." He is a living Person. Trust Him now. (Meyer, F. B. Our Daily Homily).

**Acts 16:15 And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.**

KJV 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.

NET Acts 16:15 After she and her household were baptized, she urged us, "If you consider me to be a believer in the Lord, come and stay in my house." And she persuaded us.

GNT Acts 16:15 ἡ δὲ βαπτισθεῖσα καὶ ἡ οἰκία αὐτῆς, παρεκλεσεν ἡ γουσα, Ἐκεῖ κατὰ μέτρον τὸ κυρίου εἶναι,

ε σελθ ντες ε ς τ ν ο κ ν μου μ νετε· κα παρεβι σατο μ ς.

NLT Acts 16:15 She was baptized along with other members of her household, and she asked us to be her guests. "If you agree that I am a true believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my home." And she urged us until we agreed.

ESV Acts 16:15 And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

CSB Acts 16:15 After she and her household were baptized, she urged us, "If you consider me a believer in the Lord, come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

NIV Acts 16:15 When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

NAB Acts 16:15 After she and her household had been baptized, she offered us an invitation, "If you consider me a believer in the Lord, come and stay at my home," and she prevailed on us.

NKJ Acts 16:15 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.

NJB Acts 16:15 After she and her household had been baptised she kept urging us, 'If you judge me a true believer in the Lord,' she said, 'come and stay with us.' And she would take no refusal.

GWN Acts 16:15 When Lydia and her family were baptized, she invited us to stay at her home. She said, "If you're convinced that I believe in the Lord, then stay at my home." She insisted. So we did.

NRS Acts 16:15 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.

YLT Acts 16:15 and when she was baptized, and her household, she did call upon us, saying, 'If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, having entered into my house, remain;' and she constrained us.

- **when** : Ac 16:33 8:12,38 11:14 18:8 1Co 1:13-16
- **If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord** Eph 1:1 Php 1:7 Philemon 1:17 1Pe 5:12 3Jn 1:5
- **come into my house and stay** : Ge 18:4,5 Jud 19:19,20 Mt 10:41 Lu 9:4,5 10:5-7 Ro 16:23 Ga 6:10 Heb 13:2 2Jn 1:10 3Jn 1:8
- **And she prevailed upon us** : Ge 19:3 33:11 Jdg 19:21 1Sa 28:23 2Ki 4:8 Lu 14:23, 24:29 2Co 5:14, 12:11 Heb 13:2
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## LYDIA'S GOOD WORKS AUTHENTICATE HER NEW BIRTH

**And when she and her household (oikos) had been baptized** - The clear implication that not only was Lydia saved but also all in **her household**, for the missionaries would have baptized only genuine believers. Remember that water baptism is in no way effects or contributes to salvation of one's soul. Instead water baptism is an outward manifestation of a person testifying to the inner transformation of their soul by the Spirit empowered Gospel - in short water baptism is an outward sign of an inner work of grace.

**David Jeremiah** wrote, "The reference to her 'household' doesn't mean that they were automatically saved because Lydia was saved. It means that the impact of her conversion was so strong that those over whom Lydia exercised influence were likewise convinced of the truth of the Gospel and believed and were baptized. It probably included her immediate family and her extended family as well, including household servants."

**Had been baptized** (907) (**baptizo** from **bapto** = cover wholly with a fluid; of a ship that "dipped" = sank) literally means to submerge, to dip or immerse as in water and that is the meaning in this passage. In fact of the 77 NT uses of baptizo, the majority in the Gospels and Acts are associated with literal water baptism.

The Greeks used **baptizo** to describe the dyeing of a garment, in which the whole material was plunged in and taken out from the element used. Baptizo was used of the act of sinking ships. Figuratively, **baptizo** pictures the introduction or placing of a person or thing into a new environment or into union with something else so as to alter its condition or its relationship to its previous environment or condition. In this sense baptizo means to be identified with. The person who is baptized in water is in effect saying "I now am identified with Christ" so in that sense the literal baptism testifies to the figurative meaning.

**And her household** - see similar descriptions of the **household** -- John 4:53; Acts 11:14, the jailer and his household (Acts

16:33), Cornelius (Acts 10:24, 44), Crispus (Acts 18:8), Aristobulus (Ro. 16:10), Narcissus (Rom. 16:11), and Stephanas (1 Cor. 1:16).

Lydia's **household** apparently consisted of her servants. There is no indication that she was either married or a widow.

**Spurgeon** - Lydia was evidently a woman of some property. The purple which she sold was an expensive article. She seems to have been engaged in business on her own account; and when Paul met with her, she was far off from her workshop and her home. She had a house, therefore, in the place to which she had come to sell her purple; and she "constrained" the men of God to make use of her house, and to tarry there. Thus was Christianity brought into Europe, for which we praise the name of the Lord.'

## EVIDENCE OF GENUINE CONVERSION

The Lord had opened her heart and now Lydia opens her home!

**She urged ([parakaleo](#)) us, saying, "If you have judged ([krino](#)) me to be faithful to the Lord** - Her immediate hospitality reminds me of James' illustration of genuine saving faith regarding **Rahab the harlot** (James 2:25+) "In the same way, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by (in this context the word means shown to be righteous by her) works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way?" Lydia's offer of hospitality was a reflection of the truth of Ephesians 2:10<sup>+</sup> that we are "we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them." In short, note the two evidences of her conversion - She boldly identified herself with Christ by being baptized, and she insisted that the missionaries stay at her house. Clearly Lydia was not saved by her good works, but she was saved for good works (Eph 2:10+).

**If you have judged ([krino](#)) me to be faithful to the Lord** - This "If statement" is a first class conditional and assumes she is **faithful** (a believer, a follower of Christ). **NET** Bible translates it "After she and her household were baptized, she urged us, "If you consider me to be a believer in the Lord, come and stay in my house." And she persuaded us."

**Faithful** ([4103](#))([pistos](#) from [peitho](#) = to persuade - induce one by words to believe, have confidence) is something or someone who is worthy of faith or keeps promises and is applied to God, humans, His Word, etc *Pistos* means dependable (worthy of reliance or trust), trustworthy, steadfast, unswerving.

**NET Note** - Or "faithful to the Lord." BDAG 821 s.v. *pistos* 2 states concerning this verse, "Of one who confesses the Christian faith believing or a believer in the Lord, in Christ, in God Ac 16:15." L&N has "one who is included among the faithful followers of Christ—'believer, Christian, follower.' "

**MacArthur** on **come into my house and stay** ([meno](#) in the [present imperative](#)) - **Hospitality** is required of all Christians (Rom. 12:13; Heb. 13:2; 1 Pet. 4:9), especially women (1 Tim. 5:10) and church leaders (Titus 1:8). It was critical in the ancient world, where inns were often unsuitable for Christians to stay in. They were filthy, dangerous, expensive, and often little more than brothels. To make a home where travelers could be exposed to Christian love, family life, and fellowship was a high priority for Christian women (cf. 1 Tim. 5:9-10). Lydia's hospitality gave proof that she was a truly liberated woman (cf. John 13:35)." (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Acts)

### Related Resource:

- [What does the Bible say about hospitality?](#)
- [Who was Lydia in the Bible?](#)

**She prevailed** (she persuaded)([3849](#))([parabiazomai](#) from **para** - beside, unto, implying movement toward a point + **biazo** = to force, impel) literally means to use force against, to press and figuratively to urge strongly, to constrain one by entreaties, to compel, to coerce, to persuade, "to speak in such a way as to encourage a particular type of behavior or action." (L-N)

*Parabiazomai* is the same verb used in Luke 24:29+ (only other NT use) to describe the two disciples on the road to Emmaus who "**urged** (*parabiazomai*) Him (Jesus) saying, "Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and the day is now nearly over." So He went in to stay with them."

**NET Note** - Although BDAG 759 s.v. *parabiazomai* has "urge strongly, prevail upon," in contemporary English "persuade" is a more frequently used synonym for "prevail upon."

**Vincent** - The constraint was from ardent gratitude.

**Herschel Ford** wrote, "It is always good to see a new convert showing conclusive evidences of salvation. We like to see people not only confess Christ, submit to baptism and attend the church, but we like to see changes in their personal habits, in their speech,

and in the way they conduct themselves.”

## Acts 16:11-15

### TODAY IN THE WORD

One of Britain's most famous queens, Victoria, was delighted with her visit to the childhood home of her beloved husband, Prince Albert. The prince's birthplace and boyhood home was a small castle in Bavaria known as Schloss Rosenau. Queen Victoria was so charmed by the welcome of the castle that she wrote, "How happy and how joyful we felt on awakening to feel ourselves here." The queen never forgot the warmth of her husband's childhood home.

Paul must have felt the same kind of warmth and welcome in the home of Lydia, the first European convert to Christianity. This praiseworthy woman was successful in business and generous in heart, as well as a person of obvious spiritual hunger and depth. Lydia was identified as a "worshiper of God," a term used of Gentiles who worshiped the true God and followed the teachings of Scripture (see Acts 10:2 concerning Cornelius). Lydia was not yet, however, a believer in Christ when Paul and his helpers came to Philippi. But God had prepared her heart to hear and believe the gospel (Acts 16:14).

Lydia's first actions after receiving Christ testified to the genuineness of her conversion. She immediately shared the gospel with her entire household, just like the Philippian jailer (16:32), and they were all saved.

Then Lydia presented herself and her family for baptism, a strong and in that day a costly step of obedience and identity with Christ. Finally, Lydia opened her home to Paul and his companions.

Even showing hospitality was a step of Christian courage for Lydia, given the very hostile reaction Paul later received in Philippi. We don't know how long the apostle and his friends stayed with Lydia, but it must have been a number of days.

### APPLY THE WORD

Hospitality has taken on a different meaning in our day. Hotels take away the need for believers to open their homes to visiting missionaries or to other servants of Christ. But if you have ever hosted someone who came to your church to minister, you know the joy of hospitality. And if you've never done it, you don't know what you're missing.

**Acts 16:16 It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling.**

KJV 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:

NET Acts 16:16 Now as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave girl met us who had a spirit that enabled her to foretell the future by supernatural means. She brought her owners a great profit by fortune-telling.

GNT Acts 16:16 γνετο ὁ πορευομένων μεις ες τὴν προσευχὴν παιδίσκην τινὴ χουσαν πνεύμα πθωνάπαντσαι μν, τις ῥγασαν πολλὴν παρέχεν τοῖς κυροῖς ατς μαντευομένη.

NLT Acts 16:16 One day as we were going down to the place of prayer, we met a demon-possessed slave girl. She was a fortune-teller who earned a lot of money for her masters.

ESV Acts 16:16 As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling.

CSB Acts 16:16 Once, as we were on our way to prayer, a slave girl met us who had a spirit of prediction. She made a large profit for her owners by fortune-telling.

NIV Acts 16:16 Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling.

- **as we were going to the place of prayer** Ac 16:13
- **slave-girl having a spirit of divination** Ac 16:18 8:9-11 Ex 7:11,12 De 13:1-3 18:9-11 1Sa 28:7 1Ch 10:13 Isa 8:19 Ga 5:20 2Ti 3:8
- **who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling** Ac 19:24 1Ti 6:10 2Pe 2:3 Rev 18:11-13
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



## SATAN'S COUNTERFEIT CONFRONTATION

**And it happened** - This did not just happen by "accident," but was a clear confrontation from the enemy (and just as clearly was a confrontation ALLOWED by God!). God manifestation of righteousness was immediately countered by Satan's wickedness! The Greek reads more literally "**And it came into being.**" As **Wiersbe** observes you can mark it down that "No sooner are lost people saved than Satan begins to hinder the work. In this case, he used a demonized girl who had made her masters wealthy by telling fortunes." ([Bible Exposition Commentary](#))

**That as we were going to the place of prayer** ([proseuche](#)) - Presumably the same place as Acts 16:13 but with a strikingly different result!

**John G. Butler** wrote, "Those prayer meetings by the riverside... attracted a lot of attention from the adversary of our souls. He knows that prayer is a mighty weapon against his kingdom, and that if he can hinder the praying of the saints, he can hinder the work of the saints against his kingdom... Satan does not hinder the recreation programs, the suppers, the socials, the parties, and many other like programs at church as he will hinder times of prayer. He is not bothered by a large attendance at church when it is for a supper or banquet or a ball game. But if a large crowd comes to pray, he will endeavor to make a disturbance of some sort to hinder the praying."

**A slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us** - Slavery was common the Roman Empire (some say up to 60 million slaves), but this slave was unusual as she was triply enslaved - (1) to her masters (2) to demonic forces and (3) to Sin, a third "master." It is worth noting that

**Spirit of divination** is literally reads a "**spirit of Python.**"

**Spurgeon** - She professed to tell fortunes, and to speak under inspiration. She was really "possessed" by an evil spirit.

**Divination** ([4436](#))([puthon/python](#)) in Greek mythology was the serpent that guarded the oracle of Delphi, lived at the foot of Mt. Parnassus, and was slain by Apollo. Later puthon/python came to designate a spirit of divination, then also of ventriloquists, who were believed to have such a spirit dwelling in their belly. About A.D. 50-100, Plutarch maintained that the term puthognes applied to ventriloquists, and earlier in the LXX those having demonic spirits were called ventriloquists (Lev. 19:31; 20:6, 27; including the witch of En Dor in 1 Sa 28:7). Only use of this word in the Bible.

**TDNT - Python/puthon** is the name of the snake that guards the Delphic oracle, and it is also used from the early imperial period for a ventriloquist, through whom, as many think, a god is supposed to speak, and who is thus regarded as a soothsayer. How python comes to be equated with engastrimythos, the ventriloquist, is not certain. ([Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. Theological Dictionary of the New Testament. Eerdmans](#))

**NET Note** - Or "who had a spirit of divination"; Grk "who had a spirit of [Python \(Wikipedia\)](#)." According to BDAG 896–97 s.v. puthon, originally Puthōn was the name of the serpent or dragon that guarded the [Delphic oracle](#). ([Picture](#)) According to Greek mythology, it lived at the foot of Mount Parnassus and was killed by Apollo. From this, the word came to designate a person who was thought to have a **spirit of divination**. Pagan generals, for example, might consult someone like this. So her presence here suggests a supernatural encounter involving Paul and her "spirit." W. Foerster, TDNT 6:920, connects the term with ventriloquism but states: "We must assume, however, that for this girl, as for those mentioned by Origen ..., the art of ventriloquism was inseparably connected with a (supposed or authentic) gift of soothsaying." It should also be noted that if the girl in question here were only a ventriloquist, the exorcism performed by Paul in Acts 16:18 would not have been effective.

**Vincent** - Spirit of divination (πνεῦμα Πύθωνα). Lit., a spirit, a Python. Python, in the Greek mythology, was the serpent which guarded Delphi. According to the legend, as related in the Homeric hymn, Apollo descended from Olympus in order to select a site for his shrine and oracle. Having fixed upon a spot on the southern side of Mount Parnassus, he found it guarded by a vast and terrific serpent, which he slew with an arrow, and suffered its body to rot (πυθεῖν) in the sun. Hence the name of the serpent Python (rotting); Pytho, the name of the place, and the epithet Pythian, applied to Apollo. The name Python was subsequently used to denote a prophetic demon, and was also used of soothsayers who practised ventriloquism, or speaking from the belly. The word γγαστρίμυθος, ventriloquist, occurs in the Septuagint, and is rendered having a familiar spirit (see Levit. 19:31; 20:6, 27; 1 Sam. 28:7, 8). The heathen inhabitants of Philippi regarded the woman as inspired by Apollo; and Luke, in recording this case, which came under his own observation, uses the term which would naturally suggest itself to a Greek physician, a Python-spirit, presenting phenomena identical with the

convulsive movements and wild cries of the Pythian priestess at Delphi.

**Matt Chandler** - This little girl stands in absolute contrast to Lydia. Where Lydia is Asian, this girl is Greek. Where Lydia is in control, an intellect, this little girl is impoverished, enslaved, and exploited. Where Lydia is a seeker, this little girl proclaims the way of salvation. Of course, she's doing it perhaps unwittingly, under demonic control, but she believes that salvation is available the same way the demons do. While Paul and Lydia meet in the context of a formal, orderly group meeting, Paul and the slave girl meet as she follows the missionaries around, screaming her head off. She is disruptive. As in control as Lydia is, this little girl is out of control. Now watch how God goes after her. Paul doesn't turn around and say, "I'm doing a seminar Saturday on 'Crazy.' I would like for you to come because I think you have crazy in you." He does not invite her to a Bible study, and he does not appeal to her intellect on any level. He doesn't appeal to her reason. She's irrational. No—instead, in an act of Holy Spirit power, he rebukes and exorcises the spirit that rules her and enslaves her on the inside. In an instant she finds the salvation she's been demonically mocking. The contrast between these two Philippian conversions is startling and instructive. With Lydia, the gospel gets at her heart when Paul engages her intellectually. With the slave girl, the gospel gets at her heart when Paul engages her spiritually. In both instances, the Holy Spirit grants new birth and repentance, of course, but the deliverance of the gospel takes on the context of the personal need. Paul shows how he as a missionary is willing to become all things to all people (1 Cor. 9:22). (To Live is Christ, To Die is Gain)

## HOSTILE MEETING BETWEEN FORCES OF LIGHT AND DARKNESS

**A slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us** - Witness the clash of two kingdoms. Darkness meets light. A slave of Satan meets a slave of Christ. Guess who will win?!!

**Met** (5221)(**hupantao** from **hupo** = by, below + **antao** = to meet face to face with; **antao** is from **anti** = opposite) means to go to meet and (as in the present passage) may include an element of hostility or opposition as in Jesus' encounter with demon possession (Matt. 8:28; Mk. 5:2; Lk. 8:27+) and also in Lk 14:31+ meaning to meet to oppose in battle which is a good picture of what we see here in Acts 16:16! Only use in non-apocryphal Septuagint is Da 10:14.

**Hupantao** - 10x in 10v - encounter(1), met(7), went and met(1), went to meet(1). Matt. 8:28; Matt. 28:9; Mk. 5:2; Lk. 8:27; Lk. 14:31; Jn. 4:51; Jn. 11:20; Jn. 11:30; Jn. 12:18; Acts 16:16

**Who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling- Was bringing** is in the [imperfect tense](#) indicating over and over she brought in money! In modern vernacular, she was a "**medium**" in contact with demons! The fact that fortune telling was so profitable tells us how prevalent the occult was at this time. Fortune tellers are occasionally seen in America and one can only surmise they will increase as the land becomes more and more spiritually dark. **Pray for revival!**

**Masters** (owners)(2962)(**kurios** from **kuroos** = might or power, related to kuroo = to give authority) primarily means the possessor, owner, master, the supreme one, one who is sovereign and possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership and uncontested power. That was the effect of these "owners" over this poor girl! How different this devilish **kurios** is compared to the **kurios** of Paul, et al, the Lord (Kurios) Jesus Christ!

**Profit** (business)(2039)(**ergasia** from **ergázomai** = to toil, work) means to engage in some type of activity or behavior with sustained interest and thus describes a pursuit. **Ergasia** can mean employment, craft, profession; profit or gain, this latter describing the outcome of work. **Ergasia** is used of business giving us the horrible picture in the use in Ephesians 4:19 that these unsaved men actually made a business of every kind of moral uncleanness! It does not take much thought to imagine what kind of vile business and illicit profit was associated with **every kind of impurity!** It reminds one of John's statement about the final destruction of the evil world system which had made a business trafficking in "human lives" (Rev 18:13).

All 6 uses of **ergasia** - Lk. 12:58; Acts 16:16; Acts 16:19; Acts 19:24; Acts 19:25; Eph. 4:19

**John Polhill** has an interesting note on the value ascribed to fortune tellers in the ancient world - Greeks and Romans put great stock on [augury](#) and [divination](#). No commander would set out on a major military campaign nor would an emperor make an important decree without first consulting an [oracle](#) to see how things might turn out. A slave girl with a clairvoyant gift was thus a veritable gold mine for her owners. (New American Commentary - Acts).

**David Guzik** - Because demons are created beings, not "gods" themselves, we suppose that they cannot read minds, nor actually foretell the future. But they can read and predict human behavior, and can attempt to steer events towards a previously predicted conclusion. (Enduring Word Bible Commentary - Acts)

**Fortune telling** (3132)(**manteúomai** from **mántis** = a soothsayer, diviner, which is from **mainomai** = to be

mad, beside oneself) means to divine or practice divination.

**Vincent** adds that the root verb **mainomai** = to rave, in allusion to the temporary madness which possessed the priestess or sibyl while under the influence of the god.

**Robertson** on **manteúomai**- Present middle participle of manteuomai, old heathen word (in contrast with prophēteuō) for acting the seer (mantis) and this kin to mainomai, to be mad, like the howling dervishes of later times.

**Zodhiates** says **manteúomai** means "To divine or utter spells. Such soothsayers raged, foamed and screamed, making strange and terrible noises, sometimes gnashing with their teeth, shaking and trembling, with many strange motions. Plato calls people caught up in such ecstasy possessed of madness mánteis, from Muses which excited and inspired the mind into enthusiastic songs and poems. In many instances there was a real possession by the devil, e.g., in the case of the prophetic slave girl (Acts 16:16, 18). The mánteis (pl.) were possessed of a maniacal fury which displayed itself by rolling eyes, foaming mouth, and flying hair. It is quite possible that these symptoms were sometimes produced by the inhalation of vapors or other drugs, as they were often aggravated in the seers, the Pythonesses, Sibyls, and the like. No doubt such belonged to a spiritual world not related to the true God, a relationship not with heaven above but with hell below. The Word of God condemns this maniacal fury. Paul says in 1 Cor. 14:32: "The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets" and not to any devilish powers. A prophet of God speaks not in an unknown tongue as the soothsayers, but in an understandable language. He indeed speaks not of himself but is possessed by the Spirit of God (Rev. 1:10); his ecstasy is of God (Acts 11:5), being "moved by the Holy Ghost" (2 Pet. 1:21). Man is not "beside himself" when he is moved or led by the Spirit and filled with the presence of God, but is wise and discreet. However, in the mántis or the sorcerer, as Plato testifies, we have one in whom all sense of reason is suspended. Thus the line is drawn sharply between a mántis and a prophētēs (4396), prophet." (The Complete Word Study Dictionary - New Testament).

#### Related Resource:

- [What does the Bible say about divination?](#)
- [Should a Christian read fortune cookies?](#)
- [What are tarot cards? Are tarot cards evil?](#)
- [Wikipedia article](#).- Fortune telling

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**Jack Andrews** summarizes this section - Luke declared the possession of the girl, the profit from the girl, the proclamation of the girl, and the power over the girl. God's servants can discern evil, denounce evil, and defeat evil spirits through the power of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is hard for the modern day church to defeat Satan when many in the modern day church do not believe he exists. Illustration: A George Bama survey revealed what many "Christians" believe about Satan and evil spirits.

Four out of Ten Christians (40%) strongly agree that Satan "is not a living being but is a symbol of evil."

An additional two out of ten (19%) said they "agree somewhat with that perspective."

A minority of Christians indicated that they believe Satan is real by disagreeing with the statement: one quarter (26%) disagreed strongly and about one-tenth (9%) disagreed somewhat.

The remaining 8% were not sure what they believe about the existence of Satan.

Those America "Christians" who do not believe that Satan exists are deceived by the one that they do not believe exists.

We will not be effective in battling Satan, defeating Satan, or getting victory over Satan without discerning his activity, his power, and his intentions.

Homes are being torn apart; lives are left in shambles; children are left helpless and homeless; diseases run rampant; crimes are skyrocketing; suicide is on the increase—Satan and his demons are very active.

There was not only demonic activity in Philippi, but there is demonic activity in America! ([Jack Andrews Expository Studies – Understanding Acts](#))

At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God. —Acts 16:25

As Christians, we understand the spiritual significance of Christ's sacrifice at Calvary, but it's easy to forget about the tremendous agony He endured there. The worst aspect was separation from the Father, but the physical suffering was also horrible beyond comprehension.

In his book *Dare To Believe*, Dan Baumann shares some thoughts that can deepen our figured into a gloom index. Think about what Paul and Silas endured (Acts 16). Any one of their troubles was enough to ruin the sunniest day. Imagine the irritations of dealing with greedy profiteers who had turned a demon-possessed girl into a sideshow (vv.16-17). Think about the pain of confronting an angry mob and furious judges (v.22), of receiving a whipping and imprisonment (v.23), and of having your feet locked in stocks (v.24).

But Paul and Silas rose above it (v.25). How did they do that? They were filled with the Holy Spirit, and they had a sense of mission. They were motivated by a desire to obey God and spread the message of Christ.

Like them, we can rise above the mood swings prompted by our circumstances. By being strong in the Spirit, we can overcome the gloom index. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

God often sends me joy through pain,  
Through bitter loss, divinest gain;  
Yet through it all—dark days or bright—  
I know my Father leads aright. —Conklin

God's Son can brighten our darkest days.

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### The Gloom Index (Version 2) [Mart DeHaan](#)

At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God. —Acts 16:25

Gray skies and blue moods—the two seem to go together. In fact, some weather forecasters describe the amount of cloudy days a region can expect during its winter season as “the gloom index.”

Other factors might be figured into a gloom index. Think, for instance, of what Paul and Silas, those two first-century co-workers for Christ, endured (Acts 16). Any one of their troubles was enough to ruin the sunniest day.

Try to imagine the frustration of dealing with greedy profiteers who had turned a demon-possessed girl into a sideshow (vv.16-17). Think about the pain of confronting an angry mob and furious judges (v.22), of receiving a whipping and imprisonment (v.23), and of having your feet locked in stocks (v.24). How's that for a gloomy atmosphere?

Paul and Silas were able, though, to rise above their circumstances (v.25) because they were motivated by a desire to obey God and spread the message of Christ.

We too can rise above the gray skies of discouraging circumstances by relying on the Holy Spirit. We can find encouragement and hope in God's Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We can overcome the gloom index. ([Click to go to the full devotional including a related picture and a link at the bottom of the page to one of their excellent devotional booklets.](#) Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

God, give us wings to rise above  
The clouds of trial that block the sun,  
To soar above gray skies and see  
The love and goodness of Your Son.  
—Sper

No day is dark when you live in the light of God's Son.

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### Acts 16:16-25 Choose Your Color By [Vernon Grounds](#)

I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. —Philippians 4:13

A college student decided one summer that he would earn money for his tuition by selling Bibles door-to-door. He began at the home of the school president. The president's wife came to the door and explained politely that her family didn't need any more books. As the student walked away, she saw him limping. “Oh, I'm sorry,” she exclaimed. “I didn't know you were disabled!”

When the student turned around, she realized she had offended him. So she quickly added, "I didn't mean anything except admiration. But doesn't your disability color your life?" To which the student responded, "Yes, it does. But thank God, I can choose the color."

When Paul and Silas were imprisoned at Philippi and their backs were raw from beatings, they sang hymns (Acts 16:23-25). They chose the bright color of praise instead of the dark colors of depression, bitterness, and despair.

No matter what affliction or crisis we may face, we too can decide how we will respond. With the enablement of the Holy Spirit, we can refuse to paint our lives in the dull gray of grumbling and complaining. Instead, our chosen color can be the azure blue of contentment because God's help is always available. ([Click to go to the full devotional including a related picture and a link at the bottom of the page to one of their excellent devotional booklets.](#) Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

He gives me joy in place of sorrow;  
He gives me love that casts out fear;  
He gives me sunshine for my shadow,  
And "beauty for ashes" here. —Crabbe

God chooses what we go through; we choose how we go through it.

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#### **Acts 16:16-26 God Will Make A Way** By [Dave Branon](#)

I know that You can do everything. —Job 42:2

Missionary Bill Moore serves in South Africa, but one day he visited neighboring Zambia to help his mission organization buy some property. The first problem he ran into was that the mission was not recognized by the government, which meant they could not buy any land. Registration could take months. Bill and his co-workers prayed, and God provided a contact who helped them secure the needed papers in 15 minutes.

Next, Bill's group needed permission from the land commissioner to buy the property. This was another months-long process—usually. However, they walked out of the office with approval in minutes. What could have taken a year—getting these two documents—took less than an hour! They discovered that God can make a way when it seems there is no way.

Paul and Silas found this out too. While they were praying in prison, God sent an earthquake to free them (Acts 16:26).

Does this mean that we can always expect God to arrange things exactly how we want them? No. But in His sovereignty, He makes a provision for things to get done the way He wants them done. Our job is to pray, to follow His leading, and to trust Him with the results. If He wants it done, God will make a way.

God is greater than our greatest problem.

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#### **Acts 16:16-29 Everyday Blessings** By [Vernon Grounds](#)

In everything give thanks. —1 Thessalonians 5:18

Missionary Benjamin Weir was held hostage in Lebanon and imprisoned under miserable conditions for 16 months. In his first interview after his release, he was asked how he spent his time and how he dealt with boredom and despair. His answer stunned the reporters. He simply said, "Counting my blessings."

"Blessings?" they responded.

"Yes," he explained. "Some days I got to take a shower. Sometimes there were some vegetables in my food. And I could always be thankful for the love of my family."

We can understand why the reporters were astonished. It's hard for most of us to be consistently thankful for the commonplace blessings that make life pleasant and comfortable—the unfailing supply of our daily needs, the provision of food and shelter, the companionship of friends and families. There are times when we may even forget the wonderful mercies of God's redeeming grace.

Paul and Silas, though they were beaten, thrown into prison, and placed in stocks, were still **"singing hymns to God"** (Acts 16:25).

May we learn from them, and from Benjamin Weir, to count our blessings no matter what our circumstances. We have many reasons to rejoice. ([Click to go to the full devotional including a related picture and a link at the bottom of the page to one of their excellent devotional booklets.](#) Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Are you ever burdened with a load of care?  
Does the cross seem heavy you are called to bear?  
Count your many blessings, every doubt will fly,  
And you will be singing as the days go by. —Oatman

Praise to God comes naturally when you count your blessings.

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### **Acts 16:16-34 The Only Remedy**

By [Richard DeHaan](#)

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household. —Acts 16:31

What does it mean to **'believe on the Lord Jesus Christ'**? (Acts 16:31). Here's an illustration that may help to answer this question:

Suppose you are sick and call for a doctor. After a thorough examination, he says you've contracted a fatal disease, but medical science has discovered a cure. You may be convinced that he is the best physician available, that his diagnosis is accurate, and that the medication he prescribes is your only hope. But you must take the medicine. If you just lie there and refuse the remedy, you will die! So it is with God's offer of salvation. You may say you're sure that the story of Jesus is true, but if you don't reach out the hand of faith you will be lost for all eternity. You must personally receive the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the only remedy for your sins.

An elderly man in the hospital told a visitor, "When I became very ill and was taken to the emergency room, a physician I had never seen examined me. I could tell that he really knew his business. I had so much confidence in him that I said, 'I want you to be my doctor.'" That's how we receive salvation. When we hear the gospel message and are introduced to the Lord Jesus, we must say, "I want You to be my Savior!" ([Click to go to the full devotional including a related picture and a link at the bottom of the page to one of their excellent devotional booklets.](#) Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

God sent His Son to die for us,  
No other life would do;  
So why not trust in Christ today—  
Accept His gift to you. —JDB

Salvation is a free gift, but we must receive it.

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### **Acts 16:13-15, 29-34**

TODAY IN THE WORD

In her book *Open Heart—Open Home*, Karen Burton Mains writes:

"I am firmly convinced that if Christians would open their homes and practice hospitality as defined in Scripture, we could significantly alter the fabric of society. We could play a major role in its spiritual, moral and emotional redemption. "For the Christian, hospitality is not an option. It is an injunction. . . . In Webster's dictionary, the definition for hospitable is wedged between the word 'hospice,' a shelter, and the word 'hospital' a place of healing. Ultimately, this is what we offer when we open our home in the true spirit of hospitality. We offer shelter; we offer healing."

This book is right. Hospitality should be the hallmark of every family that has been truly touched by Christ. Once you have tasted the Savior's love, acceptance and blessing, it is only natural for you to want to extend those gifts to others. Midway through the book of Acts, a chapter details the conversion of two individuals. Paul and his entourage are led by the Spirit of God into Europe (16:9), where they meet Lydia, an upwardly mobile businesswoman. She believes in Christ (v. 14) and immediately insists that her new missionary friends come home with her to be her guests (v. 15). No specifics of that stay are included in the text; however, we get the idea that Lydia made every effort to make her guests feel at home. Perhaps Lydia's home even became a kind of hostel—a place for weary workers to find spiritual and emotional nourishment.

Later, Paul and Silas find themselves in a Philippian jail. Following a midnight praise service and a God-ordained earthquake, the men lead the jailer and his family to Christ. What does the new convert do? He tends to their wounds (v. 33), brings them into his

home, and feeds them (v. 34).

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### **Acts 16:16-34**

Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. - John 8:32

#### **TODAY IN THE WORD**

According to a 2004 report from the U.S. State Department, human trafficking is the third most profitable criminal activity. Each year, around 600,000-800,000 people are trafficked—and 50 percent of those are children. Sometimes children are kidnapped; others are lured with false promises of lucrative work. Instead, they become indentured servants in mines, sex workers, child soldiers, or sweatshop slaves.

Exploiting children for profit is not new, and our reading today includes the story of a slave girl whose owners were making a great deal of money from her demon-possessed powers.

As the book of Acts recounts how Paul and Silas started the church in Philippi, we are introduced to a diverse assortment of people. First was Lydia, the wealthy woman who believed the gospel and opened her home to the missionaries; second was the slave girl, who could not have been more opposite to Lydia. She had no control over the fortune she was producing, and no status in the city. The work of God in both Lydia and the slave girl reminds us that the gospel can transform anyone, whether rich or poor, slave or free.

The spirit that controlled this girl was known as a truth-telling spirit, and her owners used her to tell fortunes. But this spirit also began proclaiming the truth about Paul and Silas; day after day the girl would follow Paul and his companions shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved” (v. 17).

This was, in fact, the truth. But Paul was not content to let the truth about him and his mission be proclaimed as a means to support evil and to profit from this girl's slavery. In the name of Jesus, he commanded the spirit to leave her, freeing her from her demon-possession. But freeing her from the spirit also meant depriving her owners of their profits. Furious, they brought legal charges against Paul and Silas. They valued greed over deliverance.

#### **TODAY ALONG THE WAY**

Paul understood the value of this girl's life—not just her profits. Will we stand for the value of life, even when others profit from its abuse and destruction? Abortion destroys thousands of lives every day in the United States, and many people profit from it, whether financially, socially, or politically. We certainly need to be prayer warriors on this issue. Perhaps you could also support a crisis pregnancy center in your area by volunteering, donating needed supplies, or giving financially.

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### **Acts 16:16-34**

He was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family. - Acts 16:34

#### **TODAY IN THE WORD**

One spring evening in Chicago, choir director Joseph Richardson was taking a walk with his four-year-old daughter, Kaniyah. Suddenly, a red Chevy Cavalier jumped the curb and hurtled toward them, speeding out of control with a drunk driver at the wheel. The father had only a split second to react. Richardson grabbed his daughter and lifted her out of the way, just before the car pinned him against an iron fence. He was killed—Kaniyah was injured, but she lived. Richardson made the ultimate sacrifice, giving his own life to save the life of his daughter.

Christ loved each of us that much. When the force of this truth hits us, we cannot help but respond with heartfelt joy—whether tears of joy or shouts of joy, it is deep, powerful joy.

In today's reading, Paul and Silas had been carrying out a successful ministry in Philippi, and the church there grew to a size that “disturbed” the city. The trouble began when Paul cast out a demonic spirit from a slave girl who had been following them around, calling out that these men knew the truth (see James 2:19). Since her owners had profited from her fortunetelling abilities and lost out economically from her liberation, they took revenge by dragging the missionaries into court on trumped-up charges.

Paul and Silas were stripped, beaten, and imprisoned. They responded by singing hymns (v. 25). For them, faith was not simply the absence of discouragement, or the courage to pray for release, but the presence of godly joy. They felt so secure in Christ that when an earthquake hit and the prison doors sprang open, they felt no need to run. They sensed a greater work of God taking place, and indeed the jailer and his entire household were ripe for saving faith. Within a single, roller-coaster ride of a night, this jailer went from suicidal (because he assumed the prisoners had escaped) to offering hospitality to two former inmates and receiving the joy of eternal life (v. 34).

#### **APPLY THE WORD**

The Philippian jailer asked one of the most significant questions in Scripture: “What must I do to be saved?” And Paul and Silas gave one of the most significant replies: “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved” (vv. 30-31). It is the prayer of all of us at Today

in the Word that all of our readers trust in Christ for salvation (John 1:12). If you have never been delivered from sin and experienced the joy of faith in Christ, we pray that you will trust the saving work of Jesus today!

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### **Acts 16:16-34**

Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. - Acts 16:16-34

#### **TODAY IN THE WORD**

Thomas Watson, a Puritan pastor and writer in 17th century London, had this to say about suffering:

“As the hard frosts in winter bring on the flowers in the spring, as the night ushers in the morning star, so the evils of affliction produce much good to those who love God. . . . Afflictions work for good in that they make way for glory. . . . As plowing prepares the earth for a crop, so afflictions prepare and make us fit for glory. As the painter lays his gold upon dark colors, so God first lays the dark colors of affliction, and then He lays the golden color of glory. The vessel is first seasoned before wine is poured into it; the vessels of mercy are first seasoned with affliction, and then the wine of glory is poured in.”

Paul and Silas had this same attitude, and counted it an honor to suffer for the name of Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 11:23-28; Phil. 1:29-30). They'd gotten into trouble in Philippi specifically for doing God's work. Their persecutors had economic motivations, abetted by spiritual blindness and a fear of foreigners. These factors came together to cause the two men to be beaten and imprisoned without a trial.

Sometimes God's will takes us to hard places. One minute Paul and Silas were casting out a demon, the next minute they were sitting helplessly in jail, but it was all part of God's sovereign plan.

God sustained His missionaries, not just to survive or endure, but to thrive. His grace to them filled them with such joy that they could praise Him, even from a jail cell. By doing so, they became channels of divine mercy to the other prisoners and to the jailer. The other prisoners were listening to them singing, perhaps in amazement. No doubt they heard the truth about Christ in their songs. When God sent an earthquake, the jailer and his family also heard the way of salvation, and gladly received the gift of new spiritual life.

#### **APPLY THE WORD**

Rejoicing in suffering is not a natural response--it's a supernatural one. How can we learn to share the attitudes displayed by Thomas Watson, Paul, and Silas?

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### **Acts 16:16-40**

Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. - Acts 16:25

#### **TODAY IN THE WORD**

Jean S. Munro, a medical missionary in Zaire, noticed that her water had been tasting bitter. Her water supply, commonly enough in that area, was collected rainwater kept in a sealed storage tank. When her dog and cat refused to drink it and the stench from her tap became overpowering, she asked a colleague to check it out. When the tank was unsealed, the decomposing body of a large, poisonous snake was found.

What had happened? A local witch doctor, angered at losing influence, had by some devilry put the dead snake inside the tank. When its poison sacs burst, he thought that the missionary would surely die, proving his power. But Munro didn't die . . . God miraculously saved her from the deadly venom in her drinking water! God delights to exercise His power on behalf of His people. He did so in today's reading as well, powerfully rescuing His servants from a Philippian jail.

What was the crime of Paul and Silas? They cast a demon out of a slave-girl. It was referred to as a “python spirit,” associated with fortune telling. Why did she cry out a testimonial to Paul and the gospel (v. 17)? It seems that proximity sometimes causes some demons to confess the truth (see Luke 8:28; James 2:19). At any rate, this girl brought in a tidy income for her owners, so Paul's action was a direct hit in their pocketbook. They had the two missionaries beaten and thrown into prison.

Paul and Silas responded with joy despite their circumstances (cf. Rom. 8:28). They praised the Lord, praying and singing hymns. When Paul later wrote to the Philippians, “Rejoice in the Lord always” (Phil. 4:4), they knew he really did mean always! Since the other prisoners listened, this was also evangelism. After God sent an earthquake to free them, Paul and Silas didn't miss a beat, sharing the gospel with the warden and his family. When they accepted the gospel, it's no surprise to find them also “filled with joy” (v. 34)!

#### **TODAY ALONG THE WAY**

Do you have a joyful heart? Let's put it another way: would you praise the Lord and sing hymns if you found yourself unjustly thrown into prison today? Paul later wrote to the Philippians: “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!” The secret lies in turning all our anxieties over to the Lord in prayer. If we do that, our hearts will be guarded from worry by the ocean-deep peace of Christ, and we'll be liberated to trust and joy (Phil. 4:4-7)!



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## **Acts 16:11-17:15**

The Lord opened her heart. - Acts 16:14

### **TODAY IN THE WORD**

In the 1930s, American missionary to India, J. Waskom Pickett, wrote about “mass movements” in which entire communities came to Christ simultaneously. He noted that where individuals were knit into families and communities, effective evangelism must focus on the whole group. Each person still had to make an individual decision about Jesus, but Pickett discovered that few conversions occurred apart from the family or community. We see similar “mass movements” in the New Testament where entire households come to faith (see Sept. 13).

Because there was no synagogue in Philippi, God-fearers met beside the river, just outside of town. The first convert, Lydia, was likely a widow and was probably wealthy, as the purple dye she sold was very valuable.

What a stark contrast between Lydia and the slave girl! To understand Paul's rebuke, we need to know that “God most high” also applied to Zeus or the Egyptian goddess, Isis. Philosophers called “the way of salvation” the release from fate. Any association between the gospel and the demonic couldn't be tolerated.

We don't know the circumstances of the other prisoners, but they had probably never heard fellow prisoners singing in the night, nor had they experienced an earthquake that set them free! Notice that the jailor's concern was “What must I do to be saved?” Now notice how clearly Paul stressed salvation by faith alone!

As Roman citizens, Paul and Silas never should have been treated as they were. Yet Paul's concern wasn't for himself; a dangerous precedent would be set for the Philippian church if such arbitrary treatment were tolerated.

From Philippi, Paul and Silas traveled to Thessalonica. Once again, some Jews stirred up opposition. City officials would have been anxious to avoid any trouble. After Philippi and Thessalonica, the Bereans' reception of the gospel must have greatly encouraged Paul.

### **TODAY ALONG THE WAY**

Although Berea was a small town off the beaten track, its inhabitants exhibited an approach to Scripture that remains a model for believers everywhere. They received Paul's message about Jesus with eagerness and examined the Bible to see if what he said was true. This week, consider taking notes during the Sunday morning sermon so that you can do further study when you get home, or listen to a daily Bible study via podcast or radio for another opportunity to examine the Bible.

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## **Robert Morgan Sermon - The Philippian Fortune-Teller Acts 16**

Today we are coming to the last of four messages on the subject of witchcraft and the Bible. Our first message on February 21st focused on the Person of Jesus Christ, who is before all things and by whom all things hold together. Our second message consisted of an overview of biblical teaching about witchcraft and the occult. Last week we investigated the story of the most famous witch in the Bible, the Witch of Endor, whom King Saul consulted in 1 Samuel. Today in this final message, I would like to look at a New Testament witch or spiritist, a slave girl whose story is told in Acts 16.

Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.” She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!” At that moment the spirit left her. When the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. They brought them before the magistrates and said, “These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.” The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten. After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully (Acts 16:16-23).

This chapter tells the story of the Apostle Paul's first venture into Europe. Traveling with Luke and Silas, he entered the great city of Philippi and there established a church. His first convert was a prosperous businesswoman named Lydia. But the second person whose story is told is a nameless slave girl who had a demon that enabled her to tell the future. Verse 16 says: Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit...

### **A Slave Girl**

In the ancient Greek version of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, the very same phrase is used to describe the Witch of Endor.

This slave girl was a kind of witch, and as such she would have been right at home in our culture today. CNN recently ran an article on the increase of interest in witchcraft in the media, saying: The number of witches invading prime time and movie theaters these days is downright scary. In the last few years, movie audiences have been treated to witchy films like "Hocus Pocus," "The Craft," and the recent box office topper "Practical Magic," starring Nicole Kidman and Sandra Bullock. On TV, there's "Sabrina the Teenage Witch" on ABC, and "Charmed" on WB. So what is the attraction to witches? "I think we're in the time when the metaphysical world is so interesting," says actress Alyssa Milano, who stars as one of three sibling witches in "Charmed." "The psychics and the psychic hotlines, people are looking for something to believe in." Kathleen McGowen, a Wiccan priestess (a witch), says being a witch is about being a woman. "(It) is about reclaiming the divine female's aspects, which is something that's been denied to us for a very, very long time," McGowen says. If there's any spell to be cast by the movies and shows, it's against the negative stereotypes associated with the term "witch." Phyllis Currot, a Wiccan high priestess currently on a book tour promoting "Book of Shadows," says the pop culture demand for witches is a good thing. "A witch is anyone who cultivates divine and sacred gifts," she says. "But what's important about 'Practical Magic' and all these shows is that they're showing witches are good."

Well, the passage here in Acts 16 begs to differ. According to Luke, this woman's powers were the result of her having "a spirit." That is biblical terminology for being possessed by a demon. There are over 100 references to demons in the Bible, most of them occurring in the NT. Every writer of the NT except the author of Hebrews, mentions demons one way or the other.

I was talking to Ken Eagleton this week, a friend of mine who spent many years as a missionary in Brazil. He told me of several encounters he had with the demon-possessed. In one case, members of his church asked him to visit someone who was having trouble. When he entered this woman's bedroom, he found her literally stiff as a board, lying there, he said, like a piece of lumber, unable to move anything but her eyes. The room was very small, but Ken squeezed into a little chair near her bed and tried to talk to her. He learned from her family that she had recently visited a famous witch in the next village who had given her some medicines to take and some rituals to perform to help her feel better. Now she was lying there, unable to talk and unable to open her mouth. The only sound she could make was a faint grunting sound from her throat. As Ken tried to work with her, all at once as fast as lightening, she drew up her knees, spun around as if on a lazy susan, and slammed her feet into his stomach, pressing him against the wall. Others in the room rushed to restrain her.

Finally Ken stopped trying to talk to the woman and he addressed instead the demons, asking them their names. (From the New Testament we learn that demons have names, and Jesus sometimes asked them to identify themselves.) To Ken's surprise, the demons started giving the names of people. As he told me the story he said, "This is the only time demons ever identified themselves to me using human-like names. Usually they called themselves things like Lust, Suicide, Nicotine, Alcohol, Immorality. But this time, they gave personal names." Ken worked and prayed a long time, but he was never able to get the demons to leave the woman.

I asked him why the demons would not leave, and he told me that the missionaries in Brazil never had any real success with people who didn't really want to be delivered.

I also asked Ken why we hear and read so much about demon possession overseas yet do not often seem to encounter them in our churches in the United States. Ken's answer is that in Brazil and Haiti and nations like that, the people openly seek out evil spirits. They overtly interact with the demonic world. "But," Ken continued, "as witchcraft and ouiji boards and dungeon-and-dragon type games become more and more a part of our culture, we're going to see more and more cases of demon possession here in the United States."

Then Ken said something else interesting: "We'd all be terribly surprised," he told me, "if we knew just how deeply our current society is being influenced by demons."

I think he's right.

One of the magazines that I read and that I have written for is designed especially for pastors called Leadership Journal. In the current issue, there is an interesting article by a Baptist pastor in Tucson. He said that some time ago on a Sunday night during the closing moments of the evening service, an impression of impending death overwhelmed him. He felt he had just preached his last sermon and would die before the next Sunday. Returning home, he sat down and waited until late in the night, expecting to die. He did the same the next night, and strange tinglings moved down his arms. On Tuesday morning he called a cardiologist and was given a treadmill test, then a neurological examination. "Your symptoms don't fit any of the usual neurological problems or diseases," he was told. "Perhaps you have some exotic problem we've never encountered." The doctors advised him to return home, resume his normal activities, and see if any other symptoms developed.

His oppression did not abate. On Thursday, a gentleman in the church called him and said, "I really hate to bother you, but we had something happen that may interest you. A woman struggling to get out of witchcraft just revealed that she and some of her friends had placed a curse on you. They actually prayed for a spirit of death to destroy you. I know this is probably nothing, so I almost did not call. But perhaps you'll find the information useful."

The pastor immediately asked God to protect him by the blood of Jesus Christ and he rebuked the evil spirits. Immediately the oppression lifted and the symptoms dissipated.

### **A Fortune-Telling Spirit**

So here we have a woman, a slave girl, who had a spirit. What kind of spirit did she have? Verse 16 continues: ...we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. This brings up an interesting question. How can a demon foretell the future? I want to tell you something about the devil. He is not the opposite of God. God is omnipotent--all powerful. The devil isn't. God is omnipresent--always present in every location. The devil isn't. God is omniscient--all knowing. The devil isn't. If anything, Satan is the opposite of Michael or Gabriel or one of the archangels of heaven; but he is not the opposite of God. He does not possess all knowledge, and he cannot with assurance foretell the future. How, then, could this demon give someone a spirit of fortune-telling? Well, it seems quite simple to me. The devil may not know what God is going to do tomorrow, but he does have a pretty good idea of what he himself is planning unless God intervenes and hinders him.

I can illustrate it like this. I cannot predict the future, and I do not know for sure what I will be doing three or four hours from now. I may have a heart attack and be with the Lord this afternoon. I may be called to the hospital to be with a dear family this afternoon. I don't know for sure. But I can tell you what I am planning to do mid-afternoon. I am planning to be in my office, working on tonight's Bible study for the six o'clock service. I'm reasonably sure that's where I'll be and what I'll be doing. So I can make a prediction about it.

The devil is a master-planner who devises his schemes with shrewdness and foresight. So we shouldn't be surprised if some of his demons can make predictions with a better-than-average rate of accuracy. Perhaps the most famous psychic of the Twentieth Century was Jean Dixon. I have read that during World War II, she was regularly consulted by President Roosevelt on how best to carry out his tasks. According to published reports, a few years later, in the fall of 1952, as she entered St. Matthew's Church in Washington, she had a vision in which she saw the White House with the figure 1960 on the rooftop and a young man standing in front of the building. A voice told her that he would be assassinated in office. Eleven years later, John F. Kennedy's funeral was held in the very church where Jean Dixon reportedly received her prophetic vision.

Now, if that is true how do you explain it? Well, who is behind murder and violence and assassination in the world today? If the devil was plotting to commit murder, perhaps using one contingent of demons, don't you think he might announce it in advance through another contingent of demons? He wants to imitate God. He tries to duplicate God's power and God's miracles? He wants to counterfeit God's ability to give prophecy. And so his demons evidently give some people the ability to be fortune-tellers. In Philippi, there was such a woman and her services were being marketed by her owners, making them a great deal of money.

"Servants of the Most High God"

But now we come to verse 17: This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting,

"These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved."

Does it seem odd to you that a demon-possessed girl would go around announcing the arrival of missionaries? How do you explain her words? To be honest, I don't know why a demonized girl would continually shout, **These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.**

I have three ideas about it.

1. Maybe the demons were so mesmerized by the presence of the Gospel and the Gospel-preachers that they couldn't help but shout it. We know that during Jesus' ministry, demons shouted similar things: What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are--the Holy One of God (Mark 1:24).
2. Maybe the demons were mocking the preachers. If we could hear the tone of voice and the voice inflections, perhaps we would realize immediately that the demons were saying these words sarcastically and in derision.
3. Perhaps it wasn't the demons at all speaking these words, but the slave girl herself. Perhaps she was crying out for liberation and for help.

Whatever the reason, her continually shouting and shrieking was a vexation for Paul and he finally turned around and addressed the evil spirit, saying: **In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her! And the Bible says, "At that moment, the spirit left her."**

There is freedom and power and liberation in the name and by the power of Jesus Christ. As Martin Luther said:

The prince of darkness grim  
We tremble not for him.  
His rage we can endure  
For lo, his doom is sure.  
One little word shall fell him.  
Charles Wesley put it likewise:  
Jesus! The name high over all,  
In hell, or earth, or sky;  
Angels and men before it fall,  
And devils fear and fly.

Notice how the Lord turned the tables on Satan and used all of this for the furtherance of the Gospel. I once heard a very wise woman say that Satan often overreaches. He attacks us so fiercely that he unwittingly drives us straight to God. It happened in this case. The slave owners were so upset at having lost the girl's clairvoyant abilities that they dragged Paul and Silas before the magistrates, had them flogged and fastened in the innermost cells of the prison. But at midnight, Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening. A terrific earthquake rocked the prison, and the doors flew open. The prisoner's chains fell off. The chief jailer cried out in alarm, but Paul reassured him that everyone was safe and still in place.

### "What Must I Do?"

Calling for lights, the jailer fell trembling before the preachers and asked one of the most famous questions in New Testament history: Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And Paul said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved and your household. The simplicity of his answer reflects the simplicity of the Gospel. We come to Jesus Christ in simple faith and pray something like this: Dear Father, I believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose again to give me forgiveness of sins and eternal life. In that he gave himself for me, I am now giving myself to him. Be my Savior and Lord from this moment forth.

Paul Harvey once told about a little boy who caught birds and kept them in a sack.

One day an old man met him along the pathway. The man heard pitiful sound of wings slapping the inside of the sack and a hopeless, pathetic sort of chirping coming from within. "Whatcha got in the sack?" asked the old man. "I've got a sack full of sparrows!" said the little boy. "What are you going to do with them?" asked the man. "I'm going to take them out of the sack one by one and tease them, pull a feather out now and then, and then I'll feed them to the cat."

"How much do you want for the whole sack?" asked the man. The boy thought about it and finally told the man, "Two dollars."

"Done," said the old man. He reached into his pocket, pulled out the two dollars, and gave them to the boy. Taking the sack, he opened it, suddenly exposing it to the rich sunlight. One by one, the birds struggled toward the opening and jumped out, free, liberated, flying into the sky.

And so it happened one day that God met Lucifer with a huge bag. Inside the bag were the most helpless sounds of life struggling to be free. "What have you got in the bag?" asked God. "People," said Lucifer with a smirk.

"And what will you do with them?"

"I will torment and oppress them one by one, and when they are all worn out with trials, I will throw them into hell."

"And what will you take for all of them?"

"Your only Beloved."

"Done!" said the Father. And he reached down to earth and gave us the gift of his Son.

Have you trusted him? Have you given him your life?

Sir, what must I do to be saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved and your household.

**Acts 16:17 Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, "These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation."**

KJV 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.

NET Acts 16:17 She followed behind Paul and us and kept crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation."

GNT Acts 16:17 ατη κατακολουθο σα τ Πα λ κα μ ν κραζεν λ γουσα, Ο τοι ο νθρωποι δο λοι το θεο το ψ στου ε σ ν, ο πινες καταγγ λλουσιν μ ν δ ν σωτηρ ας.

NLT Acts 16:17 She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, and they have come to tell you how to be saved."

ESV Acts 16:17 She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation."

CSB Acts 16:17 As she followed Paul and us she cried out, "These men, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation, are the slaves of the Most High God."

NIV Acts 16:17 This girl followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved."

- **These men:** Ac 19:13 Mt 8:29 Mk 1:24 Lu 4:34,41
- **bond-servants** Da 3:26,28 6:16,20 Jon 1:9 1Pe 2:16
- **of the Most High God** Ge 14:18-22 Ps 57:2 78:35 Da 4:2 5:18,21 Mic 6:6 Mk 5:7 Lu 8:28
- **proclaiming to you the way of salvation** Act 16:30,31 18:26 Mt 7:13,14 22:16 Mk 12:14 Lu 1:77,79 20:21 Joh 14:6 Heb 10:19-22
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **DEMONIC "ENDORSEMENT" OF PAUL'S MINISTRY!**

This has to be one of the more ironic passages in all of the Bible, for a woman enslaved to demonic forces is actually crying out that Paul and those with him were proclaiming the way of salvation!

**Following after Paul and us** - **Following after** is in the [present tense](#) indicating she "tailed" Paul's party everywhere they went in Philippi!

**She kept crying out, saying** - **Crying out** is the verb [krazo](#) is not a whisper but a loud cry so all could have heard her and in the [imperfect tense](#) indicates she was **crying out** over and over. You can picture the chaotic scene and imagine Paul's blood pressure beginning to slowly rise with each one of her hoarse cries that sounded like the cries of a raven! [Listen to the irritating cry of these ravens](#) and imagine this following you everywhere you walked!

**These men are bond-servants of the Most High God** - Again it is fascinating that she is echoing orthodox theology! These men were not their own but those who had given themselves to the service of their Master, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Robertson on Most High God** - Pagan inscriptions use this language for the Supreme Being. It looks like supernatural testimony like that borne by the demoniacs to Jesus as "son of the Most High God" (Luke 8:28. Cf; also Mark 1:24; Mark 3:11; Matthew 8:29; Luke 4:41, etc.). She may have heard Paul preach about Jesus as the way of salvation.

**Bondservants** (1401)([doulos](#) from [deo](#) = to bind) ([Click](#) additional notes on [doulos](#)) was an individual bound to another in servitude and conveys the idea of the slave's close, binding ties with his master, belonging to him, obligated to and desiring to do his will and in a permanent relation of servitude. In sum, the will of the **doulos** is consumed in the will of the master.

A **bondservant** is one who surrendered wholly to another's will and thus devoted to another to the disregard of his own interest. Paul and Timothy were not their own but had been bought with the price of the blood of Christ. They were now the property of our Lord Jesus Christ and were His slaves exclusively. No man can serve two masters (Mt 6:24-note). Paul and Timothy had been slaves of Sin (see note on ["the Sin"](#)) by their birth into Adam's likeness, but now they are slaves of Christ by their new, second birth. They had no will of their own, no business of their own, no time of their own and were acting for their Master, Christ; dependent upon Him and obedient to Him.

**The Most High God** (cf Ps 78:35, Da 5:18+) is the Hebrew name **EI Elyon** which connotes God's sovereign control over all history. In short, the demonically inspired cries of this woman were "spot on!"

## Related Resource:

- El Elyon: Most High God - Sovereign Over All

**NET Note** postulates (I am not sure this is accurate) "Her expression the Most High God might have been understood as Zeus by the audience."

**Henry Morris** - The continual harangue by the girl, referring to "**the most high God**," designed to produce ridicule and resentment against Paul, showed that her "spirit of divination" was actually a demonic spirit. Compare the experience of Jesus, whom they recognized as God, with such evil spirits (Mt 8:31,32 Mk 1:24,34). (Defender's Study Bible Note)

**Larkin** has an interesting note - polytheistic pagans, who were henotheists as opposed to monotheists, there were many "highest gods"; **the title had been attached to Zeus, Isis** the mother-goddess of the kingdom of Lydia in Asia, and **Baal**. A pagan hearer would understand the term to refer to whatever deity he or she considered supreme. (The IVP New Testament Commentary Series – Acts)

**John MacArthur** wrote, "The father of lies speaks the truth when it suits his purposes, disguising himself and his emissaries as angels of light. Some of his most effective and diabolical work is done in the name of Jesus Christ. He often uses a little truth to ensnare people in a false system of religion."

**Who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation**- Again the irony of the darkness acknowledging loudly these men were declaring the light of the Gospel, which was a "**way of salvation**." As noted below more accurately this woman was saying that they were proclaiming "**a way**," and not **the** one and only **way** (Jn 14:6, Acts 4:12+).

**John MacArthur** makes an excellent point - The father of lies speaks the truth when it suits his purposes, disguising himself and his emissaries as angels of light (2 Cor 11:13-14). Some of his most effective and diabolical work is done in the Name of Jesus Christ. He often uses a little truth to ensnare people in a false system of religion. Since the demon-possessed girl was agreeing with the Christian preachers, the natural assumption would be that she was part of their group. She would then have been in a position to do unspeakable harm to the cause of Christ. (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Acts)

**Proclaiming** (2605) (**kataggello** from **kata** = an intensifier, down + **aggelos** = messenger and **aggello** = to declare, report) literally means to "declare down". It means to announce, with focus upon the extent to which the announcement or proclamation extends and so to proclaim throughout. It means to declare plainly, openly and loudly! It was used of solemn religious messages. Webster adds that our English "**proclaim**" (from pro = before + clamare = to cry out) means to "declare publicly, typically insistently... in either speech or writing... and implies declaring clearly, forcefully, and authoritatively." (Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary)

## A WAY NOT THE WAY!

**The way** - There is no definite article so it can be rendered "a way" - Young's Literal is more accurate - "she having followed Paul and us, was crying, saying, 'These men are servants of the Most High God, who declare to us a way of salvation;' (Act 16:17YLT)

Her declaration would suggest that Paul's way was one of many ways -- it was **a way** but there were other ways. Clearly this is countered by many other passages including Jesus declaration that He is "**THE WAY**" (definite article is present) in Jn 14:6. The (demonically inspired) Jehovah's Witnesses in the past translated Jn 14:6 as "**a way**" but in the 2013 revision accurately translated Jesus as "the way" (a fact you could call to their attention when they visit your front door!!!) "**The way**" means one specific way, not one way among a number of other ways! Peter chimes in with Acts 4:12+ - "And there is salvation in **no one (absolute negation!)** else; for there is **no (second absolute negation!)** other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we **must (dei = this verb speaks of necessity)** be saved."

**Salvation** (Deliverance) (4991) (**soteria**) means rescue or deliverance from danger, destruction, peril and slavery to and consequences of sin and unto restoration to a former state of safety, health, well being and preservation from danger of destruction. **Salvation** was a significant secular term in Paul's day as it was applied to national deliverance. And so the Roman Emperor was looked upon as a "savior."

**Spurgeon** - Here was an evil spirit bearing witness to the truth of God, and it grieved Paul. When you hear a bad man ridiculing religion, do not be surprised; what else could you expect from him? But if you heard the devil recommending Christ, then you ought to be grieved, for the Lord Jesus does not want patronage or praise from Satan. Men would begin to suspect that Christ was in league with Satan, if Satan began to speak well of Christ. Dread to be spoken well of by ungodly men; for there is great danger in such praise. There may be a motive at the bottom of the flattery, which may be full of mischief. Paul, being grieved, silenced the

demon, and cast him out of the damsel. Like his Lord, he would not allow the devil to testify concerning himself and his mission.

## The Rescuers By [Dave Branon](#)

These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation. —Acts 16:17

You've taken up spelunking, and you're busily exploring an interesting cave. You check out the tunnels and pathways for hours, wandering deeper and deeper into the unfamiliar darkness. Others outside, realizing you must be lost, send someone to rescue you. Suddenly you hear a voice calling your name. The rescuer greets you, saying, "Follow me, I know the only way out." You protest, "How can you say there's just one way? There must be others." The rescuer replies, "I've explored this cave, and you must go my way or you'll never get out." "You're too narrow," you reply. "Go on. I'll figure it out myself." It sounds foolish, but that's the way some people respond when you mention that the only way to get to heaven is through faith in Christ. You would expect them to say, "Wow! Thanks for the good news!" Instead, you might get a reaction similar to that of the cave explorer: "Leave me alone. I don't believe that one-way business." A rescuer loves, cares, and risks his well-being for others. The apostle Paul was a rescuer who was thrown in jail for trying to spread the good news (Acts 16:23). People won't always receive our rescue attempts with open arms, but that must not stop us from showing the way. Be a rescuer! ([Click to go to the full devotional including a related picture and a link at the bottom of the page to one of their excellent devotional booklets](#). Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Some people do not like to hear

That Jesus is the only way,

But we must still proclaim that truth

So they will follow and obey.

—Sper

Those who are lost need someone to show them the way.

**Acts 16:18 She continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!" And it came out at that very moment.**

KJV 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.

NET Acts 16:18 She continued to do this for many days. But Paul became greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!" And it came out of her at once.

GNT Acts 16:18 το το ὁ ποι π πολλ ς μ ρας. διαπονηθε ς ὁ Πα λος κα πιστρ φας τ πνε ματι ε πεν, Παραγγ λλω σοι ν ν ματι ησο Χριστο ξελθε ν π α τ ς· κα ξελθεν α τ τ ρ .

NLT Acts 16:18 This went on day after day until Paul got so exasperated that he turned and said to the demon within her, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And instantly it left her.

ESV Acts 16:18 And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And it came out that very hour.

CSB Acts 16:18 And she did this for many days. But Paul was greatly aggravated and turning to the spirit, said, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!" And it came out right away.

NIV Acts 16:18 She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so troubled that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her.

- **Paul was greatly annoyed:** Ac 14:13-15 Mk 1:25,26,34
- **I command :** Ac 3:6 9:34 19:12-17 Mk 9:25,26 16:17 Lu 9:1 10:17-19 Col 2:15
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**GREAT ANNOYANCE LEADS TO**

## DEMONIC DELIVERANCE

**She continued doing this for many days** - **Continued doing** is the [imperfect tense](#) indicating she cried out over and over, again and again. Paul must have been a Spirit filled man to manifest such persistent patience!

**John G. Butler** wrote, "The adversary is persistent. He will not hinder us just once or twice then quit. He will disturb time and time again. He intends to hinder our work until he can stop it. Would that we were as persistent and dedicated in doing the work of God. It is so hard to get church members to take on a job that requires an indefinite commitment. They will help for a few times; but when you ask them if they would do a certain task every week or until the task is finished, they nearly have a stroke. They feel to be asked to serve that persistently is much too demanding. They can, of course, commit themselves to the things of the world with great dedication. But when it comes to the things of the Lord, they have very little commitment at all."

John Phillips wrote, "Evil spirits lie, they deceive, their testimony is tainted with falsehood. People who consult spiritist mediums and psychics are often brought into contact with intelligences that haunt the unseen world, but they are evil intelligences. Their only business with humankind is to blind and bind. At times they will tell the truth, at other times they will lie. Once a person is caught in their toils they lead him into dreadful snares." (Exploring Acts)

**But Paul was greatly annoyed** - Paul finally reaches his limit with the continual cries of the demonically possessed woman.

**Greatly annoyed** (greatly disturbed in Acts 4:2) ([1278](#))(**diaponeo** from **dia** = through or as intensifier + **poneo** = to labor from **ponos** = toil or pain) means literally to labor through, to work out with labor or to produce with labor. Figuratively, it means to feel burdened as the result of someone's provocative activity, be greatly disturbed, or to be annoyed. To be grieved or to become wearied or grieved at the continuance of anything (Acts 4:2; 16:18). The slave girl with demonic spirit "wore Paul out".

**Zodhiates** - In the pass. with the mid. meaning *diaponéomai*, to grieve oneself, to be tired by labor, become wearied or grieved at the continuance of anything....There are a number of syn. indicating grief and trouble, but none as a result of labor indicating fatigue. (Ibid)

**Louw-Nida** - to be strongly irked or provoked at something or someone

**Vincent** on **diaponeo** - Both grieved at the sad condition of the woman, and thoroughly annoyed and indignant at the continued demonstrations of the evil spirit which possessed her. In the aor. pass. *dieponéthēn*.

**Robertson** on **diaponeo** - *diaponeō*, old verb, to work laboriously, then in passive to be "worked up," displeased, worn out. In the N.T. only here and Acts 4:2 which see (there of the Sadducees about Peter's preaching). Paul was grieved, annoyed, indignant.

Paul did not want either the Gospel or the name of God to be promoted by demons. Satan is a liar and will use truth one minute but in the next minute will speak a lie and the unsaved listener would not know the difference.

The only other use of **diaponeo** is Acts 4:2+ -

As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them, 4:2 **being greatly disturbed** because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. (Acts 4:1-2)

Jesus commanded the demons not to speak of Him (Mark 1:34; Luke 4:41) and Paul like his Lord wanted no publicity from the forces of darkness.

**I command you in the Name of Jesus Christ to come out of her! And it came out at that very moment** - Notice there was no ritual, simply a command to depart! Modern literature and movies has elevated the practice of so-called exorcism to such a place that it is much like this ancient woman -- good for business! (One thinks of "The Exorcist" which grossed \$232.9 million domestically!)

**Command** ([3853](#))(**paraggello** from **para** = beside, alongside, near by, at the side of + **aggelos** = messenger, **angelo/aggello** = to announce) means to hand on or pass on an announcement from one to another who is at one's side, such as to what must be done, usually with the idea of a command or charge. **Paraggello** often was used in the context of a military command and demanded that the subordinate obey the order from the superior

All of Luke's uses of **paraggello** in Acts -

Acts 1:4; Acts 4:18; Acts 5:28; Acts 5:40; Acts 10:42; Acts 15:5; Acts 16:18; Acts 16:23; Acts 23:22; Acts 23:30;

**In the Name** - This speaks of the authority of Jesus. There was nothing "magical" about the name of Jesus as the sons of Sceva



painfully discovered - see Acts 19:13-14+. Cults throw around the name Jesus but they clearly refer to "another Jesus." In the judgment men and women will claim they professed Jesus but He will deny them (read Mt 7:21-23)! To profess Jesus is not the same as possessing Jesus and of Him possessing us as His own **possession!** (read Titus 2:14, 1 Peter 2:9, 1 Cor 6:19-20).

**Guzik** adds that "Jesus cast out demons with His own authority. Paul was careful to speak to demons only in the authority of Jesus Christ, and he spoke beyond the afflicted girl to the demon itself with this authority of Jesus." (The Enduring Word Bible Commentary – Acts)

**At that very moment** - "Bruce translates the phrase, It came out there and then. He comments: "The words had scarcely left his lips when she was released from its power." (Guzik)

The ability to cast out demons was a special ability of the original **apostles** for Jesus declared that they had "authority to cast out the demons." (Mark 3:15). And so some such as John MacArthur explain that "The demon left the girl in obedience to Paul's command and his apostolic authority. The ability to cast out demons was a special ability of Christ's apostles (Mk 3:15; 2 Co 12:12). That and the other miraculous gifts confirmed that the apostles were God's spokesmen. Despite the claims of many today, no believer has direct authority to command demons to obey him. The spiritual battle is now fought with the armor and weapons discussed in Ephesians 6:10ff." (Ibid)

Others such as **John Piper** have an alternative view (see resources below).

**John MacArthur** has an excellent summary of the radical distinction between the **two women in Acts 16** - These two women typify all of humanity. Everyone is either liberated by Jesus Christ or enslaved by Satan. The only path to freedom is that followed by Lydia —of seeking God, listening to the gospel, and having a heart opened to respond by the Lord. Those who do so will not be disappointed, for the Lord Himself promises in Jeremiah 29:13, "You will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart." (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Acts)

**Larkin** - As at Jerusalem and Judea (Acts 5:16) and in Samaria (Acts 8:7), so now in a move across the sea toward the end of the earth, the advance of the gospel means the extension of the kingdom of God through a liberation of those under Satan's authority (Acts 26:18). What must I do to be saved? Experience the liberating power of the Lord Jesus Christ, who not only opens but also cleanses hearts (Acts 15:9). This exorcism is both similar to and different from Jesus' ministry of exorcism. Christians confronting the forces of evil today can find guidance here. Persons who were certifiably demon-possessed, as indicated by their talk and action, attacked Jesus and Paul in order to hinder the preaching of the kingdom of God. Both Jesus and Paul dealt authoritatively with the demon-possessed using the simple command "Come out!" and the results were immediate (Lk 4:35; 8:29; 9:42; 11:14). There the similarities end. Jesus' authority is personal and direct. The demons fear Jesus and what he can do to them, though they still seem to taunt (Lk 8:28 and parallels). He rebukes them. Paul's authority and ours is christocentric and derived. In the name of Jesus Christ...come out of her (Acts 16:18; compare Acts 19:13, Acts 19:17). Exorcism must be approached today, then, with much care, humility and prayer. But there must also be bold confidence that Jesus is still bringing release to the captives (Lk 4:18). (IVP New Testament Commentary Series – Acts)

#### **Related Resources:**

- [Can a Christian today perform an exorcism? What does the Bible say about casting out demons?](#)

It appears that as the Word of God was completed, the Christians had more weapons with which to battle the spirit world than the early Christians did. The role of casting out demons was replaced, for the most part, with evangelism and discipleship through the Word of God. Since the methods of spiritual warfare in the New Testament do not involve casting out demons, it is difficult to determine instructions on how to do such a thing. If necessary at all, it seems that it is through exposing the individual to the truth of the Word of God and the name of Jesus Christ. ([click for full discussion](#))

- [What does the Bible say about demon possession / demonic possession?](#)
- [John Piper's view on Exorcism \(Also see this video\)](#)

**Illustration:** Ray Comfort shared the following story in "the Evidence Bible." He said, "For two years I was heckled almost daily by a woman named Petra. She dressed in black, carried a wooden staff, and said she was a prophet to the nation. As in the days of Noah, only eight would be saved. She maintained that she was one of them, and that she determined who the other seven would be. She also claimed that my spirit visited her spirit, in the night (it did not!). The problem was that she would "**Amen**" much of what I preached, adding her thoughts at the points I made. She would do this at the top of her very loud voice. It must have appeared to newcomers to the crowd that we were a team, preaching the same thing. This is why I was delighted when (every now and then) she would get angry with something I said and let out a string of cuss words, revealing to the crowd that we were not on the same side." (Jack Andrews Expository Studies – Understanding Acts)

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## John Kitto - Daily Bible Illustrations - The Pythoness—Acts 16:16–19

Paul and his associates seem during their stay in Philippi to have frequented the place of prayer beside the river very constantly. On the way thither from Lydia's house, where they lodged, they were followed by a "certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination," who, in the excited manner of her sort when under what was regarded as their inspiration, kept crying out, "These men are the servants of the most high God, who show unto us the way of salvation." But Paul did not like to have attention called to them in this manner, or to receive even a true testimony from a source so suspicious, and on which damaging misconceptions might be founded. He was, besides, wearied out with this continual interruption; and from all these causes, as well, probably, from compassion for the girl's state, and to show the dominion which his Lord exercised over all the powers of darkness, he commanded the spirit, in the name of Jesus Christ, to depart from her. The spirit left her immediately; and, being restored to her right mind, she no longer conceived herself possessed of prophetic gifts. It has been much questioned what was the nature of this "**spirit of divination**" which possessed her. In the original it is called "**a spirit of Python.**" We shall therefore endeavor to ascertain what this form of possession distinctively was, without entering here into general inquiries as to the nature of possession, or as to forms and species of divination, merely referring to what has been lately stated as to the prevalence of multiplied forms of divination in this age. **Python** was a name of **Apollo**; and as the **Pythian Apollo**, the chief seat of his worship was at **Delphi**, and his oracle there was the most famous in the world, and the last that lost its credit. At this place was the famous tripod, seated on which over an opening to a cavern below, the priestess became inspired, and delivered responses and prophecies. The tripod, when not in use, was elevated upon an altar in the shape of a pillar, as represented in the engraving, where also a priest and priestess of Pythian Apollo are seen.

**Delphic Tripod, with Priest and Priestess of Apollo** ([See picture of Delphic priestess on Tripod](#) or [another depiction on the Tripod](#))

**The Delphic priestess** was the proper Pythia, as receiving the inspiration of the Pythian Apollo in the highest and most orthodox form. But the Pythian inspiration was not supposed to be limited to this form, to the Delphic priestesses, nor to Delphi. Cassandra was inspired by Apollo apart from any of these conditions and it occurs to us that it may be far the best course to glance through her case, as represented (in the Agamemnon of Aeschylus) in an age in which this species of inspiration was fully credited, in order to learn the nature of this delusive inspiration in an instance which, like the one before us, is not involved in Delphic rites. The peculiarity in the case of **Cassandra** was not in the aspects of her possession, but in the doom that her true prophecies should not be believed.

**Cassandra** is not always in this state of possession, but the spirit takes possession of her for a time, and, when the occasion occurs, with painful force and constraining violence, extorting agonizing cries:—

"O! O! hu! hu! alas!  
The pains again have seized me! my brain turns!  
Hark to the alarum and prophetic cries!  
The dizziness of horror swims my head!"  
Again:—  
"O what a mighty fire comes rolling on me!  
Help! help! Lycean Apollo! Ah me! ah me!"

The future which she foretells seems to her a visionary present, while yet known to be and declared to be a future. So thus Cassandra sees and proclaims the future coming of **Orestes**, which did not happen till eight years after her own death:—

"Who's at the gates? a young man, fair and tall,  
A stranger by his garb, from foreign parts;  
Or one who long since has been exiled here:  
A stripling, murderer of his mother's breast!  
Brave youth, avenger of his father's death!  
He'll come to build the high-wrought architrave,  
Surmounting all the horrors of the dome.  
I say, the gods have sworn that he shall come."

In like manner she sees her own death represented to her before it occurs. But besides this, she, as in what is called second sight, or in the alleged visions of the mesmeric trance, beholds and describes, at the time then present, what is transacting elsewhere. Thus she sees and describes, while she is without, the murder taking place in the palace of Agamemnon, through every step of its progress:—

"Alas! ah wretch! ah! what art thou about?  
A man's in the bath—beside him there stands  
One wrapping him round—the bathing clothes drop,

Like shrouds they appear to me, dabbled in blood!  
O for to see what stands there at the end!  
Yet 'twill be quick—'tis now upon the stroke!  
A hand is stretched out—and another too!  
As though it were a-grasping—look, look, look!"

As a prophetess of Apollo, [Cassandra](#) wears a distinctive dress, although a slave, that is, a captive of the sword. So when she becomes aware that Clytemnestra is designing her death, she lets us know:—

"She there, that two-legged lioness....  
Will kill me! woeful creature that I am!  
.....  
O why then keep this mockery on my head?  
Off with ye, laurels, necklaces, and wands!  
The crown of the prophetic maiden's gone.  
[Tearing her robes.  
Away, away! die ye, ere yet I die!  
I will requite your blessings thus, thus, thus!  
Find out some other maiden, dight her rich,  
Ay, dight her rich in miseries like me!  
And lo! Apollo, himself, tearing off  
My vest oracular! Oh, cruel god!  
Thou hast beheld me, e'en in these my robes,  
Scoff'd at when I was with my kinsmen dear,  
And made my enemies' most piteous despite,  
And many a bad name had I for thy sake;  
A Cybele's mad woman, beggar priestess,  
Despised, unheeded, beggared, and in hunger;  
And yet I bore it all for thy sweet sake."

The estimation of her to which she thus painfully alludes, indicates the existence, even thus early, of a lower class of soothsaying women, by some deemed crazed, by others regarded as impostors, with whose claims hers were confounded. Indeed, at times she inclines to doubt whether this is not indeed the case with herself:—

"Or rave I, dreaming of prophetic lies,  
Like some poor minstrel knocking at the doors?"  
The same estimate, varying somewhat, appears in the remarks of the chorus upon her impassioned utterances:—  
"God dwells within her, though she be a slave."  
Again:—  
"We have heard, O prophetess, of thy great name."  
And further on:—  
"O sure thou art one of a deep-raging soul,  
Driven mad by a god, crying out."  
And still more pointed:  
"'Tis some god who has put that bad spirit in my mind,  
With the power of a demon, and a strong heavy spell."  
Yet afterwards the chorus admits:  
"To us thy words seem worthy of belief"

We are thus enabled to discern that contemporary opinion was nearly as varied and uncertain with regard to the Pythian inspiration as is our own; and the explanations of it embraced all the alternatives which different commentators have applied to the case of the Pythoness of Philippi. She also was a slave, for it is stated that she "brought her masters much gain by sooth-saying." Anciently, and indeed at present in the countries where slavery exists, the money value of a slave was greatly affected by the profession or trade he had acquired, by the accomplishments he had been taught, or by his capacity in any way of earning money for his master. Some possessed such qualities that when they fell into slavery (a large proportion of the slaves being prisoners of war), and some acquired them in slavery, the masters being watchful to cultivate for their own profit any special aptitudes their slaves manifested. Hence the ancient Greeks and Romans possessed slaves of all professions—not only men bred to the various mechanic arts, but philosophers, rhetoricians, grammarians, dramatists, physicians. Those also who made a trade of the arts of divination, were

watchful after individuals who manifested qualities, aptitudes, or even infirmities, which might prove advantageous to them in their business, and sought to gain possession of them by purchase or otherwise. Those who, like this damsel, possessed the "spirit of divination," were doubtless rare, and their value correspondingly high. The value of the girl to her owners seems to be shown by the fact that she had a plurality of "masters;" either because her price had been too great to be advanced by a single person, or such as no one person had cared to risk upon the uncertainty of her life.

The deliverance of this damsel by Paul from the spirit that possessed her, at once divested her of this rare value as a slave, and deprived the masters of the current gains from her services. She was no longer of any more value for sale or service than any other female slave. They were not likely to regard this serious loss, "the loss of their gains," with complacency. They were indeed greatly enraged. But as they could not well urge what had been done to their private loss as an offence against the public peace, and as they were doubtless unwilling to call attention to the real nature of the transaction, lest it should have redounded to the credit of the apostle, they found it convenient to assume a wondrous zeal for the public religion; and seizing Paul and Silas, who appeared as the leading persons of the missionary party, they hauled them before the magistrates, then sitting in the court or forum, held in the market-place, as a place of the greatest concourse, just as in many of our own old towns the courthouse is in or over the market. In a colony like this, the magistrates were chosen by the inhabitants, were necessarily Romans, holding generally military commands, and had a wholly independent jurisdiction, being in no way responsible even to the governor of the province, who could not come into the colony to exercise any authority in it. This peculiarity is, with his usual precision, indicated by Luke, by the use of the peculiar and proper title (στρατηγός) not elsewhere used in Scripture except to denote a military command, being, in fact, the Greek for praetor. He uses the plural number, the magistrates being usually two, and hence also frequently called duumviri. Cicero mentions it as an innovation in this time that the duumviri of Capua had assumed the title of praetors, and had lictors going before them, not with sticks or staves, but with fasces, or bundled rods, like the praetors at Rome; and he thought that in a few years they might affect the title of consuls. The example did in fact spread; and these magistrates were everywhere praetors, and had their fasces borne before them, in nearly all the Roman colonies.

**Acts 16:19 But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the authorities,**

KJV 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,

NET Acts 16:19 But when her owners saw their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities.

GNT Acts 16:19 ὁ ντες ὁ ο κριοι α τ ς τι ξ λθεν λ π ς τ ς ρ γ α σ α ς α τ ν, πι λα β με νοι τ ν Πα λ ο ν κα τ ν Σ ι λ ν ε λ κ υ σ α ν ε ς τ ν γ ο ρ ν π τ ο ς ρ χ ο ν τ α ς

NLT Acts 16:19 Her masters' hopes of wealth were now shattered, so they grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them before the authorities at the marketplace.

ESV Acts 16:19 But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers.

CSB Acts 16:19 When her owners saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities.

NIV Acts 16:19 When the owners of the slave girl realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities.

- **the hope** - Acts 19:24-27 1Ti 6:10
- **they** - Acts 9:16 14:5,19 15:26 18:12,13 21:30 Mt 10:16-18 24:9 Mk 13:9 2Co 6:5
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

**But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone-** "The owners had no concern for the girl; they were interested only in the income she provided, and now that income was gone. (The conflict between money and ministry appears often in Acts: Acts 5:1-11; 8:18-24; 19:23ff; 20:33-34)" (Wiersbe - Bible Exposition Commentary – Be Daring Acts 13-28).

**Ramsay** wrote that "The most sensitive part of 'civilized' man is the pocket"!

In Ephesus, we see a similar conflict between Paul and the worshippers of the false idol Artemis, as the gospel had begun to negatively impact the sale of the lifeless shrines of Artemis. Luke records...

Acts 19:25-26 these he gathered together with the workmen of similar trades, and said, "Men, you know that our prosperity depends upon this business. And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all.

Mark 5:16-17 And those who had seen it described to them how it had happened to the demon possessed man, and all about the swine. And they began to entreat Him to depart from their region. (**Comment:** They did not care that the man was set free from the demon, but that their profit was gone.)

**Hope** (1680) (**elpis**) is used usually in Scripture to refer to an absolute certainty of future good (as the blessed hope of the Lord's sure return in Titus 2:13 - see note). However in this verse **hope** is used as it is by the secular world conveying the sense of "I hope so". They had lost the "hope so" aspect of profit!

**Profit** (see above for **ergasia** from **ergázomai** = to toil, work) refers here to their work in the sense of their business or trade (they "traded" in fortune telling) and in the sense of that which brings gain or income. (See this nuance in Acts 16:16, 19; Acts 19:24).

**NET Note** - It is often the case that destructive practices and commerce are closely tied together.

**MacArthur** - Such reactions illustrate a sad spiritual reality: love of money blurs spiritual perception. (cf 1 Ti 6:9-10)

**Seized** (1949) (**epilambanomai** from **epí** = upon + **lambáno** = to take) means to make the motion of grasping or taking hold of something. To lay hold of or to seize upon anything with the hands, to take hold of or grasp, with focus upon the goal of motion seize for help, injury, attainment or any other purpose, catch, lay hold upon, take hold of. In Luke 23:26+ uses **epilambanomai** of seizing "a man, Simon of Cyrene" to carry Jesus' cross. It is used of a non-hostile "seizing" of Paul in Acts 9:27 and Acts 17:19.

All of Luke's uses of **epilambanomai** -

Lk. 9:47; Lk. 14:4; Lk. 20:20; Lk. 20:26; Lk. 23:26; Acts 9:27; Acts 16:19; Acts 17:19; Acts 18:17; Acts 21:30; Acts 21:33; Acts 23:19

**MacArthur** makes an interesting observation on **dragged them into the marketplace** - That was an interesting turn of events for Paul, who before his conversion had made a career of "dragging off men and women" to "put them in prison" (Acts 8:3+).

Although Luke does not specifically say, it is notable that in a Roman colony, the **agora** usually included a "judgment seat" or **bema seat** which was a raised stone platform from which government officials tried cases and issued proclamations.

See Acts 18:12+ - [Bema](#) or [Here](#) or [Images of Bema](#)). This **bēma** "judgment seat" was discovered about a century ago in Corinth's **agora** and is composed of blue and white marble slabs. This high platform was flanked by two waiting rooms and may be the very one Paul was tried on by **Gallio** (Acts 18:12-17). A columned street (leading to the agora) with a row of 16 shops was also uncovered.

**Market place** (58) (**agora**) is the town-square where the people assembled in public. It can also refer to a market or thoroughfare or a broad street. Here it refers to a forum or a market place where things were exposed for sale and where assemblies and public trials were held (See similar use in Mk 7:4; Acts 16:19; 17:17)

**Kistemaker** points out that the **agora** (see [Wikipedia](#)) served "as the social center of the city. Here the unemployed waited for suitable work, the sick were healed, and the magistrates judged court cases. In those days, a plaintiff could drag a defendant into court and ask the judge to pass a verdict (James 2:6). The owners of the slave girl were acting according to Roman law when they laid their hands on Paul and Silas and put their grievance before the city authorities. (New Testament Commentary: Acts)

**Spurgeon** - They dragged them into the Forum, the place where the courts usually sat, and brought them before the magistrates, "saying "-what? "These men have cured a demoniac, they have performed a miracle, and cast a devil out of a young woman"? Oh! no; there would have been no wrong in that, so they must invent a charge. What do they say?

**Authorities** (758) (**archon** from present participle of **archo** = to rule) describes one who has eminence in a ruling capacity or administrative authority. As the next verse adds, they were the **chief magistrates**. Every Roman colony (like Philippi) was governed by two magistrates.

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Acts 16:19-40

Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved--you and your household. - Acts 16:31

TODAY IN THE WORD

A person's last words are often worth remembering. So are some of the things people say in the moment of extreme testing and

hardships. One example from American history is a seven-word sentence that is written in gold in the chapel of the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis, Maryland. This statement marks the grave of the War of 1812 naval hero John Paul Jones, who said "I have not yet begun to fight" as his ship was burning beneath him.

The apostle Paul made many memorable statements, preserved for us in the Word of God. Take today's verse, for example. It was uttered during a trial of persecution as Paul encountered a suicidal, trembling man in the middle of the night. Maybe that's why the apostle's words to Philippian jailer reveal the gospel's simplicity.

We read yesterday that Paul healed a demon-possessed slave girl in the Roman colony of Philippi. Today let's look at the rest of the story. The girl's owners were incensed at Paul and Silas because their "profit center" was now gone. So they gathered a mob and dragged the missionaries before the city magistrates on trumped-up charges.

Since Philippi was governed by the Romans, Paul as a Roman citizen was entitled to a fair trial according to Roman law. But apparently the officials gave in to the crowd's frenzy. Paul and Silas were subjected to a severe flogging without any legal grounds. But even that wasn't enough, because afterwards the two were imprisoned. They were kept in prison with their feet in wooden stocks.

We don't know why God ordained this set of painful circumstances that brought Paul in contact with the jailer. It's obvious Paul was thankful for the opportunity, and he didn't question God's wisdom. He and Silas were singing God's praises in a difficult situation and afterwards they saw the conversion of the jailer and his family. An entire household was saved because Paul and Silas were faithful and obedient in the heat of battle.

Let's pray that likewise, we would be faithful and obedient under any circumstances.

#### APPLY THE WORD

Most of us would agree the suffering Paul and Silas endured in Philippi was a big obstacle. But in the power of God, they cleared it and hit the ground running on the other side.

What's the biggest obstacle you face in being faithful to God this week? You could pull up short and turn back. Instead, why not ask God for the strength to overcome your obstacle, for His glory?

**Acts 16:20 and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, "These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews,**

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

NET Acts 16:20 When they had brought them before the magistrates, they said, "These men are throwing our city into confusion. They are Jews

GNT Acts 16:20 κα προσαγαγ ντες α το ς το ς στρατηγο ς ε παν, Ο τοι ο νθρωποι κταρ σσουσιν μ ν τ ν π λιν, ουδα οι π ρχοντες,

NLT Acts 16:20 "The whole city is in an uproar because of these Jews!" they shouted to the city officials.

ESV Acts 16:20 And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city.

CSB Acts 16:20 Bringing them before the chief magistrates, they said, "These men are seriously disturbing our city. They are Jews

NIV Acts 16:20 They brought them before the magistrates and said, "These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar

- **being Jews** Ac 18:2 19:34 Ezr 4:12-15 Es 3:8,9
- **These men are throwing our city into confusion:** Ac 17:6-8 28:22 1Ki 18:17,18 Mt 2:3 Joh 15:18-20 Ro 12:2 Jas 4:4
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### TURNING UPSIDE DOWN RIGHTSIDE UP!

No they weren't throwing the city into confusion but into certainty. The Gospel is the only Word of certainty for mankind who is

confused about their eternity! Yes indeed Paul and Silas were turning the upside down worldview of the pagans rightside up! The Gospel clarifies everything! These men were only proving the truth of 1 Cor 2:14 that

a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.

**And when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said** - Interesting that it does not say "they brought us" so not Luke (or Timothy) but only Paul and Silas. Why did they not bring Luke and Timothy? Luke is silent, so we can only speculate. Luke was a Gentile and Timothy half Gentile, so possibly there is an element of anti-Semitism toward Paul and Silas.

**Magistrates** (**praetors**) (4755) (**strategos** from **stratós** = an army + **ágō** = to lead) literally referred to the leader of an army the chief legal official of a city.

**Vine** says **strategos** "came to denote a civil commander, a governor (Latin, *duumvir*), the highest magistrate, or any civil officer in chief command, Acts 16:20, 22, 35, 36, 38; also the chief captain of the Temple, himself a Levite, having command of the Levites who kept guard in and around the Temple, Luke 22:4, 52; Acts 4:1; 5:24, 26. Cp. Jer. 20:1.

**BDAG** - 1. the highest official in a Gr-Rom. city, praetor, chief magistrate pl. of the highest officials of the Roman colony of Philippi. This title was not quite officially correct, since these men were properly termed 'duoviri', but it occurs several times in ins as a popular designation for them 2. commander responsible for the temple in Jerusalem, captain of the temple Ac 4:1; 5:24.

**Vincent** on **magistrates** - Their usual name was **duumviri**, (Wikipedia = Latin = *duumvir*, "one of the two men"; in plural originally **duoviri**, "the two men") answering to the consuls of Rome; but they took pride in calling themselves **strategoi** or **praetors**, as being a more honorable title. This is the only place in the Acts where Luke applies the term to the rulers of a city.

**Zodhiates** - The ten Athenian commanders chosen annually (with whom the *polémarchos* [n.f.], leader of the war, joined) were called generals. Afterwards only one or two were sent abroad with the army as circumstances required, and the others had charge of military affairs at home. They were the same as *polémarchos*, war minister or the leader of a war. In other Greek cities, they were the chief magistrates or prefects. *Stratēgós* was also the name given to Roman officers as consuls and also the leaders of cities. In Roman colonies and municipal towns, the chief magistrates were usually two in number, occasionally four or six who sometimes were called praetors, the Gr. equivalent of which was *stratēgós*. (Ibid)

**Gilbrant** - In the strictest sense a *stratēgós* denotes a military leader. In the New Testament, however, the word is used with two technical meanings. First, a *stratēgós* was the "captain of the temple." Called the "man of the Temple Mount" in Jewish writings, he was a priest who served as chief superintendent of the Levites and priests who stood guard at the temple. He occupied a place of dignity second only to the high priest (Luke 22:4,52; Acts 4:1; 5:24,26) (Knowling, Expositor's Greek Testament, 2:122). Second, *stratēgós* refers to a chief magistrate or highest official of the Roman Empire in certain provinces such as Philippi (Acts 16:20,22,35,36,38). (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

**Strategos** - 10x in 10v - Usage: captain(3), chief magistrates(5), officers(2).

Luke 22:4 And he went away and discussed with the chief priests and **officers** how he might betray Him to them.

Luke 22:52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests and **officers** of the temple and elders who had come against Him, "Have you come out with swords and clubs as you would against a robber?"

Acts 4:1 As they were speaking to the people, the priests and the **captain** of the temple guard and the Sadducees came up to them,

Acts 5:24 Now when the **captain** of the temple guard and the chief priests heard these words, they were greatly perplexed about them as to what would come of this.

Acts 5:26 Then the **captain** went along with the officers and proceeded to bring them back without violence (for they were afraid of the people, that they might be stoned).

Acts 16:20 and when they had brought them to the **chief magistrates**, they said, "These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews,

Acts 16:22 The crowd rose up together against them, and the **chief magistrates** tore their robes off them and proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods.

Acts 16:35 Now when day came, the **chief magistrates** sent their policemen, saying, "Release those men."

Acts 16:36 And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The **chief magistrates** have sent to release you. Therefore come out now and go in peace."

Acts 16:38 The policemen reported these words to the **chief magistrates**. They were afraid when they heard that they were Romans,

**Strategos** - 59x in 57v in the **Septuagint** -

1 Sam. 29:3; 1 Sam. 29:4; 1 Chr. 11:6; 1 Chr. 12:19; 2 Chr. 32:21; Neh. 2:16; Neh. 4:14; Neh. 12:40; Neh. 13:11; Est. 3:12; Job 15:24; Jer. 51:23; Jer. 51:28; Jer. 51:57; Ezek. 23:6; Ezek. 23:12; Ezek. 23:23; Ezek. 32:30; Dan. 3:2; Dan. 3:3; Dan. 3:27; Dan. 6:7; Dan. 10:13; Dan. 10:20;

**These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews** - At about this time, Emperor "Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome." (Acts 18:2). Anti-Semitism was on the rise and clearly is not a modern phenomenon but has its origins in antiquity. Some suggest that Luke was not arrested as he was a Gentile and similarly Timothy was half Gentile." (MacArthur)

**Swindoll** comments "Clearly, they (Ed: The accusers of Paul and Silas) couldn't tell the truth: "These men commanded a spirit to leave and now we have to work for a living." Not only would that make her masters look petty and foolish, but it was hardly a crime."

## **THE GOSPEL SHAKES UP THE UNSAVED**

One is reminded that those who convey a "fragrance of Christ" through promulgation and proclamation of His Gospel "are a fragrance of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing; to the one an aroma from death to death, to the other an aroma from life to life." (2 Cor 2:15-16).

If Satan can't shut them up, he will orchestrate affairs so that they are themselves "shut up" in prison! But as Paul said in 2 Ti 2:9+ although he suffered "hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal...the word of God is not imprisoned," as subsequent events would poignantly and powerfully prove! Watch the walls fall down!

**Simon Kistemaker** wrote, "In those days, a plaintiff could drag a defendant into court and ask the judge to pass a verdict. The owners of the slave girl were acting according to Roman law when they laid their hands on Paul and Silas and put their grievance before the city authorities."

**Throwing into confusion** (1613) (ektarasso from **ek** = out or intensifier + **tarasso** = to agitate, stir up) means to start an uproar, to throw into great disorder, causing people to riot against. This verb can mean causing a riot, disturbance, agitation, or disorder. In the passive, it means to be greatly troubled, be confounded. Liddell-Scott adds that another use was in the phrase "to have a bowel complaint" (ektarrasso + kolin). Interesting thought!

**Vincent on Jews** - Who at this time were in special disgrace, having been lately banished from Rome by Claudius (see Acts 18:2). The Philippians do not appear to have recognized the distinction between Christians and Jews.

**A T Robertson** - The people of Philippi, unlike those in Antioch (11:26), did not recognize any distinction between Jews and Christians. These four men were Jews. This appeal to race prejudice would be especially pertinent then because of the recent decree of Claudius expelling Jews from Rome (18:2). It was about A.D. 49 or 50 that Paul is in Philippi. The hatred of the Jews by the Romans is known otherwise (Cicero, Pro Flacco, XXVIII; Juvenal, XIV. 96-106).

Judaism was not a prohibited religion (the cult of the emperor being the official religion), but propagating it was regarded as a menace. Paul and Silas were regarded as Jews, since, at this time, the Romans considered Christianity to be a Jewish sect.

**MacArthur** adds that "Anti-Semitism was alive even then. The Emperor Claudius issued an order around that time expelling the Jews from Rome (Acts 18:2). This may explain why they apprehended only Paul and Silas, since Luke was a Gentile and Timothy half-Gentile. ([The MacArthur Study Bible](#))

**F F Bruce** adds that "Anti-Jewish sentiment lay very near the surface in pagan antiquity."

**Guzik** adds that "The objection that these men were Jews is even more interesting knowing the Jewish community in Philippi was small." (Ibid)

**Jews** (2453) (Ioudaios from Ioudas = Judah, cp 03063 **Yehudah** - 'praised,' a son of Jacob) is used to describe Jews as a race as opposed to non-Jews (Gentiles). All the world is either Jew or Gentile even as all the world is either a non-believer or a believer in the Jewish Messiah. Ioudaios is used as an adjective = Jewish (Acts 10:28). In John's Gospel Ioudaios is at times used with the meaning of those (especially the Jewish leaders) who were to their Jewish Messiah. Used of the land of Judea (Jn 3:22)

**Fausset Bible Dictionary** - At first one belonging to the kingdom of Judah, as distinguished from northern Israel (2 Kings 16:6). After the captivity, all members of the one new state were "Jews," i.e. in God's outward covenant, as contrasted with "Greeks" or Gentiles (Romans 1:16; Romans 2:9, margin). "Hebrew" on the other hand expressed their language and nationality, in contrast to "Hellenists," i.e. Greek speaking Jews. Again the term "Israelites" expresses the high theocratic privileges of descent from the



patriarch who "as a prince had power with God" (2 Corinthians 11:22; Romans 9:4). John uses "Jews" of the faction hostile to the Lord Jesus. By the time that he wrote the Jews had definitely rejected the gospel offered to them by the apostles at home and abroad (1 Thessalonians 2:14-16); so they are no longer regarded as the covenant people, the kingdom of God having passed from them to the Gentiles (Acts 13:45-46) The destruction of Jerusalem and the temple formally effected the transference, forever since the Jew professes a religion enjoining what God's providence makes it impossible for him to fulfil, namely, the observance of the great feasts and the sacrificial system in the temple at Jerusalem. B. F. Westcott (Smith's Bible Dictionary) notices the preparation for the last or gospel revelation by the disciplining of the Jews under

(1) the Persian supremacy (536-333 B.C.), in organization, order, and ritual;

(2) under the Greek (333-167 B.C.), in liberty and speculation;

(3) under the Asmonsean Maccabees, in independence and faith;

(4) under the Herods, in the separation between the temporal and the spiritual kingdom. JEWRY means Judea (Daniel 5:13). "The Jews' language" signifies both the Hebrew (2 Kings 18:26) and the Aramaic Hebrew acquired in the captivity (Nehemiah 13:24), "the language (lip) of Canaan" (Isaiah 19:18)

**Vine on ioudaios** - is used (a) adjectivally, with the lit. meaning, "Jewish," sometimes with the addition of aner, "a man," Acts 10:28 ; 22:3 ; in Acts 21:39 with anthropos, in some mss. (a man in the generic sense); the best mss. omit the phrase here; in Acts 13:6 , lit., "a Jewish false-prophet;" in John 3:22 , with the word chora, "land" or "country," signifying "Judean," lit., "Judean country;" used by metonymy for the people of the country; (b) as a noun, "a Jew, Jews," e.g., Matthew 2:2 ; Mark 7:3 . The name "Jew" is primarily tribal (from Judah). It is first found in 2 Kings 16:6 , as distinct from Israel, of the northern kingdom. After the Captivity it was chiefly used to distinguish the race from Gentiles, e.g., John 2:6 ; Acts 14:1 ; Galatians 2:15 , where it denotes Christians of Jewish race; it distinguishes Jews from Samaritans, in John 4:9 ; from proselytes, in Acts 2:10 . The word is most frequent in John's Gospel and the Acts; in the former "it especially denotes the typical representatives of Jewish thought contrasted with believers in Christ ... or with other Jews of less pronounced opinions, e.g., John 3:25 ; 5:10 ; 7:13 ; 9:22 " (Lukyn Williams, in Hastings' Bib. Dic.); such representatives were found, generally, in opposition to Christ; in the Acts they are chiefly those who opposed the Apostles and the Gospel. In Romans 2:28,29 the word is used of ideal Jews, i.e., Jews in spiritual reality, believers, whether Jews or Gentiles by natural birth. The feminine, "Jewess," is found in Acts 16:1 ; 24:24 . It also denotes Judea, e.g., Matthew 2:1 ; Luke 1:5 ; John 4:3 , the word "country" being understood [cp. (a) above]. In Luke 23:5 ; John 7:1 , where the AV has "Jewry," the RV translates it as usual, "Judea." ([Vine's Expository Dictionary](#))

**Zodhiates on ioudaios** - a Jew or a Judean, from Judea. All the posterity of Jacob were called "Israel" or "children of Israel" from the surname of the patriarch, until the time of King Rehoboam. Ten tribes, revolting from this prince and adhering to Jeroboam, became known from then on as the House of Israel. The two tribes of Judah and Benjamin, remaining faithful to the family of David, were called the House of Judah. Therefore, after the defection of the ten tribes, ioudaioi, Jews, signified subjects of the kingdom of Judah (2 Kgs. 16:6; 25:25; Jer. 38:19; 40:11). After the Babylonian captivity, the name "Jews" was extended to all the descendants of Israel who retained the Jewish religion, whether they belonged to the two or the ten tribes and whether or not they returned to Judah as no doubt some of them did. It is in this extensive sense that the word is applied in the NT (Acts 2:5, 10 [cf. 26:7; James 1:1]). The Apostle Paul distinguishes between the one who is a Jew outwardly and the one who is a Jew inwardly (Rom. 2:29; 3:1). By the former he means a person descended from Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob according to the flesh and observing the outward ordinances of the Mosaic Law, but destitute of the faith of Abraham, not believing in the seed which is Christ. By one who is a Jew inwardly Paul means one who, whether Jew or Gentile by natural descent, is a child of Abraham through faith in Christ, the promised seed (cf. Rom. 4:16; Gal. 3:7, 29), and consequently is a true confessor of Jehovah. Christ also speaks of the apostate unbelieving Jews of Asia Minor, i.e., those which say they are Jews, but are not (Rev. 2:9; 3:9). Luke also makes a similar allusion to the importance of Judas who betrayed Jesus in Luke 22:47. He was called Judas which means a confessor of Jehovah, but was far from deserving the glorious name. (Ibid)

**ioudais - 195x in 186v - Usage: Jew(21), Jewess(1), Jewish(8), Jews(163), Judea(46).**

Matt. 2:2; Matt. 27:11; Matt. 27:29; Matt. 27:37; Matt. 28:15; Mk. 1:5; Mk. 7:3; Mk. 15:2; Mk. 15:9; Mk. 15:12; Mk. 15:18; Mk. 15:26; Lk. 7:3; Lk. 23:3; Lk. 23:37; Lk. 23:38; Lk. 23:51; Jn. 1:19; Jn. 2:6; Jn. 2:13; Jn. 2:18; Jn. 2:20; Jn. 3:1; Jn. 3:22; Jn. 3:25; Jn. 4:9; Jn. 4:22; Jn. 5:1; Jn. 5:10; Jn. 5:15; Jn. 5:16; Jn. 5:18; Jn. 6:4; Jn. 6:41; Jn. 6:52; Jn. 7:1; Jn. 7:2; Jn. 7:11; Jn. 7:13; Jn. 7:15; Jn. 7:35; Jn. 8:22; Jn. 8:31; Jn. 8:48; Jn. 8:52; Jn. 8:57; Jn. 9:18; Jn. 9:22; Jn. 10:19; Jn. 10:24; Jn. 10:31; Jn. 10:33; Jn. 11:8; Jn. 11:19; Jn. 11:31; Jn. 11:33; Jn. 11:36; Jn. 11:45; Jn. 11:54; Jn. 11:55; Jn. 12:9; Jn. 12:11; Jn. 13:33; Jn. 18:12; Jn. 18:14; Jn. 18:20; Jn. 18:31; Jn. 18:33; Jn. 18:35; Jn. 18:36; Jn. 18:38; Jn. 18:39; Jn. 19:3; Jn. 19:7; Jn. 19:12; Jn. 19:14; Jn. 19:19; Jn. 19:20; Jn. 19:21; Jn. 19:31; Jn. 19:38; Jn. 19:40; Jn. 19:42; Jn. 20:19; Acts 2:5; Acts 2:10; Acts 2:14; Acts 9:22; Acts 9:23; Acts 10:22; Acts 10:28; Acts 10:39; Acts 11:19; Acts 12:3; Acts 12:11; Acts 13:5; Acts 13:6;

Acts 13:43; Acts 13:45; Acts 13:50; Acts 14:1; Acts 14:2; Acts 14:4; Acts 14:5; Acts 14:19; Acts 16:1; Acts 16:3; Acts 16:20; Acts 17:1; Acts 17:5; Acts 17:10; Acts 17:13; Acts 17:17; Acts 18:2; Acts 18:4; Acts 18:5; Acts 18:12; Acts 18:14; Acts 18:19; Acts 18:24; Acts 18:28; Acts 19:10; Acts 19:13; Acts 19:14; Acts 19:17; Acts 19:33; Acts 19:34; Acts 20:3; Acts 20:19; Acts 20:21; Acts 21:11; Acts 21:20; Acts 21:21; Acts 21:27; Acts 21:39; Acts 22:3; Acts 22:12; Acts 22:30; Acts 23:12; Acts 23:20; Acts 23:27; Acts 24:5; Acts 24:9; Acts 24:18; Acts 24:24; Acts 24:27; Acts 25:2; Acts 25:7; Acts 25:8; Acts 25:9; Acts 25:10; Acts 25:15; Acts 25:24; Acts 26:2; Acts 26:3; Acts 26:4; Acts 26:7; Acts 26:21; Acts 28:17; Acts 28:19; Rom. 1:16; Rom. 2:9; Rom. 2:10; Rom. 2:17; Rom. 2:28; Rom. 2:29; Rom. 3:1; Rom. 3:9; Rom. 3:29; Rom. 9:24; Rom. 10:12; 1 Co. 1:22; 1 Co. 1:23; 1 Co. 1:24; 1 Co. 9:20; 1 Co. 10:32; 1 Co. 12:13; 2 Co. 11:24; Gal. 2:13; Gal. 2:14; Gal. 2:15; Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11; 1 Thess. 2:14; Rev. 2:9; Rev. 3:9

**Ioudais** - over 200v in the Septuagint -

2 Ki. 16:6; 2 Ki. 25:25; Ezr. 4:12; Ezr. 5:1; Ezr. 6:7; Ezr. 6:8; Ezr. 6:14; Neh. 2:16; Neh. 4:1; Neh. 4:2; Neh. 4:12; Neh. 5:1; Neh. 5:8; Neh. 5:17; Neh. 6:6; Neh. 13:23; Est. 1:1; Est. 2:5; Est. 3:4; Est. 3:6; Est. 3:10; Est. 3:13; Est. 4:3; Est. 4:7; Est. 4:13; Est. 4:14; Est. 4:16; Est. 5:9; Est. 5:13; Est. 6:10; Est. 6:13; Est. 8:3; Est. 8:5; Est. 8:7; Est. 8:9; Est. 8:12; Est. 8:13; Est. 8:16; Est. 8:17; Est. 9:1; Est. 9:3; Est. 9:6; Est. 9:10; Est. 9:12; Est. 9:13; Est. 9:14; Est. 9:15; Est. 9:16; Est. 9:18; Est. 9:19; Est. 9:20; Est. 9:22; Est. 9:23; Est. 9:25; Est. 9:27; Est. 9:29; Est. 10:3; Isa. 19:17; Jer. 26:2; Jer. 32:12; Jer. 38:19; Jer. 40:11; Jer. 41:3; Jer. 44:1; Dan. 3:8; Dan. 3:12; Dan. 3:30; Zech. 8:23;

- Nave Topical Bible [Jews](#)
- Scofield Reference Index [Jews](#)
- Thompson Chain Reference [Israel-The Jews](#) [Return of the Jews](#) [Jews](#)
- Treasury of Biblical Knowledge [Slaves & Rights: & Jews Sold](#), [Jubilee Poor](#) [Jews a Blessing](#)
- American Tract Society [Jews](#)
- Bridgeway Bible Dictionary [Jew](#)
- Charles Buck Dictionary [Jews](#)
- CARM Theological Dictionary [Jews](#)
- Easton's Bible Dictionary [Jew](#)
- Fausset Bible Dictionary [Jew](#)
- Holman Bible Dictionary [Jews in the New Testament](#)
- Hitchcock Bible Names [Jew](#)
- Hastings' Dictionary of the NT [King of the Jews](#) [Jews](#)
- King James Dictionary [Jew](#)
- Morrish Bible Dictionary [Jew](#)
- Hawker's Poor Man's Dictionary [Jews](#)
- People's Dictionary of the Bible [Jew](#)
- Smith Bible Dictionary [Jew Dispersion](#), [the Jews of the](#), [Captivities of the Jews](#)
- Webster Dictionary [Jew](#)
- Watson's Theological Dictionary [Jews](#)
- 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica [Jews](#) [The Wandering Jew](#)
- International Standard Bible Encyclopedia [Jews](#) [King of the Jews](#)
- Kitto Biblical Cyclopedia [Diseases of the jews](#) [Jew](#)
- McClintock and Strong's Bible Encyclopedia [Demonology of Later Jews](#) [Jew](#) [Alexandria](#), [Jews In](#).
- The Nuttall Encyclopedia [Wandering Jew](#)
- The Jewish Encyclopedia [Antislavery Movement and the Jews](#) [Aramaic Language among the Jews](#)

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### **John Kitto - Daily Bible Illustrations - The Jailer—Acts 16:20–40**

The offence of which Paul and Silas were accused before the praetors was that, being Jews, and as such merely tolerated themselves, and thereby bound to be the more guarded in their conduct, they had been there teaching a new religion, contrary to the law. We lately showed that the heathen of this day were very ready to adopt the religion of foreigners. But when they did so, it was merely some new and congenial form of idolatry, with its images and symbols; and this, among the Romans, could only be done with the sanction of the public authorities, without which it remained unlawful to adopt or recommend the worship of any gods but those already acknowledged, or to attempt to detach the people from the worship already established. Therefore this would have seemed unlawful, whatever the religion might have been, without a sanction previously obtained; but it was doubly so in the case of Judaism (and the apostles were regarded simply as Jews), seeing that it was known to be adverse to all subsisting idolatries, and refused to

take any place with or beside them. This was the secret of the heathen hostility to Judaism, and to Christianity while regarded as a species of Judaism, and afterwards to Christianity for its own sake, when its principles came to be better understood. In the latter case it was more intense, because, to equal hostility against idolatry, as such it added dogmas of its own, at which Pagan pride revolted.

The magistrates, very sensitive to whatever might excite public disturbance, as it was insinuated this kind of teaching must do, and perceiving that the mere statement of the charge made a stir among the multitude, sought to allay the ferment by some instant provisional punishment. They therefore directed the lictors to beat the apostles with their rods. The clothes of Paul and Silas were hastily pulled off, and their bared backs exposed to this severe infliction. The lictors unbound their fasces, and with the leathern thongs proceeded to bind the prisoners, to whose backs they then, with a strong hand, applied the rods of elm. This seems to have been regarded as a severer punishment than the scourging with thongs, as used among the Jews. Besides, in that case, the number of strokes was limited by law, not exceeding forty, and therefore in practice thirty-nine; whereas the blows with the rods were only limited by the discretion of the magistrates. This, therefore, was one of the occasions to which Paul refers when he tells the Corinthians, "Thrice was I beaten with rods;" and to which also may be applied the declaration that he had suffered "stripes above measure," that is, probably, not limited in number, as among the Jews, from whom he had, he says, "five times received forty stripes save one."

Having been thus chastised, Paul and Silas were sent to the town-prison, with special injunctions to the jailer to keep them safely. Aware of the responsibility imposed upon him by such a charge, the jailer not only thrust them into the innermost and safest part of the prison, but "made their feet fast in the stocks." The instrument thus designated was ordinarily a wooden, or sometimes iron-bound machine, by which any member, and especially the neck, was so confined that it could not be raised; or into which the feet only were thrust and constrained, as in the present instance; or, finally, it was one in which the person was held—all the members, neck, hands, and feet—by means of five holes. But the painful constraint of the stocks, added to the smart of their torn backs, had no power over the undaunted spirit of the prisoners. The Lord, for whom it was their privilege to suffer, was with them in the low dungeon, and filled their hearts with spiritual gladness, which found expression in holy songs, which they sang together, in the night season. The other prisoners heard them, we are told; and doubtless they were much astonished to hear such sounds, instead of the accents of lamentation and the groans of pain. As Paul and Silas were both Hebrews, there can be little doubt that they sang some of the Psalms of David in their native tongue; and Hebrew singing never fails to attract the marked attention of those unused to it, and unacquainted with the language, as was assuredly the case with the other persons in this heathen prison. We can remember to have listened to it with strange fascination in early boyhood, as proceeding from a synagogue close by our abode.

But suddenly the voice of those who sang was stayed, and the attention of those who listened interrupted, by a terrible convulsion which made the walls of that strong prison totter, which caused all its gates and doors to fly wide open, and which made the bonds fall from the limbs of all the captives there. This latter incident of the loose bonds of the prisoners being made to drop off, is important as showing the miraculous nature of the event. It calls to mind the rending of the flowing veil of the temple by the earthquake at our Lord's crucifixion. The keeper waking suddenly from his sleep, and beholding the prison thus open, made no question that all his prisoners had escaped. He knew that for this his life was forfeited; and to avoid the ignominy of the public death that awaited him on the morrow, he drew forth his sword, at once to anticipate and escape that doom. Suicide was the common resort of Romans under such circumstances, and in their view it had more the nature of a merit and a privilege than of a crime. But Paul, perceiving the poor man's intention, called loudly, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here!"

If, then, they did not escape, what was the need of the earthquake? what the use of their loosened bonds? for they were, after all, at length freed by other means. The earthquake was manifestly the act of God, designed for a special end. That end was not the liberation of the captives, but the liberation of their jailer. God had a purpose of high mercy towards him, and to fulfill it had sent Paul and Silas to his prison, had sent the earthquake to shake its walls,—that this man's heart might be shaken; that this spirit, so long in bondage to the world and to the powers of darkness, might be set free. The keeper had doubtless heard—even the Pythoness had proclaimed it from day to day in the streets—that his captives had claimed to be divinely commissioned to declare to men the way of salvation unto eternal life. This, which had seemed to him an idle pretence, was now awfully authenticated by their songs in the night; by the earthquake; by the doors marvellously thrown open, as if for their egress; by their neglecting to do that which would have insured his ruin; and by their solicitude to preserve the life of one who had treated them so roughly. He saw divine acts that made him afraid; he recognized divine principles, which showed him the depravity of his own life and character; and a voice within told him that he was undone, unless a way of salvation were found. All this inner work was the act of a moment. He called for a light, and, hastening into the cell, cast himself at the feet of Paul and Silas, in token of his deep respect. He spoke not then—not enduring to detain them longer in that dismal place; but having brought them forth into the outer and more commodious part of the prison, he addressed to there the most solemn inquiry man can make: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Their answer was very plain and simple: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Memorable words! written as with a sunbeam over the portals of the Christian church—the record of its liberties and the charter of its hopes. They then proceeded, more at leisure, to pour into his attentive and delighted ears the history of Jesus Christ; to declare His doctrine and to explain what it was to believe in Him. All his household shared these glad tidings, having been assembled for the purpose, either at his suggestion or at the request of the apostles. The jailer then washed their stiffened stripes; and he was next himself, with his household, washed with the waters of baptism, and admitted into the church of Christ. After this he introduced them to the ease and comfort of his own apartments, and

with kind solicitude set before them such refreshment as by this time they must have greatly needed; his hospitable cares being now and then interrupted by bursts of joy at the unutterable gain to his soul which he had that night made.

It was no sooner day than the lictors made their appearance at the prison. But it was not, as might be expected, to take Paul and Silas again before the praetors for further examination, but with an order for their immediate release. How this change had been produced we know not exactly; but we do know that it was by Him who has the hearts of all men in his hands, and can turn them as He wills. Earthquakes are always awful things, and suited to alarm the guilty conscience. Especially were they terrible to the Romans, who regarded them as assured tokens of the anger of the gods: and this may have led them to reflect that they had committed a great iniquity and a culpable infraction of Roman law, for which they might be called to account, in subjecting Paul and Silas to punishment, in deference to popular clamor, without trial and condemnation, and, indeed, without having heard a word of defence. Paul knew very well how grievously the praetors had committed themselves in this respect; how illegally the magistrates had acted; and how seriously their proceedings had, in a Roman colony, compromised the much vaunted dignity and justice of the Roman law. He therefore actually refused to depart from the prison, in that underhand way. He declared that he and his friend had been illegally treated. He proclaimed that in their persons the honor of Roman citizens had been outraged, and he demanded that their vindication should be as public as their punishment had been, by the magistrates coming themselves and releasing them in due form. The good jailer, who had supposed that they would have been glad to get away on any terms, was astounded at all this; but still more was he astonished when, with very little delay, the magistrates actually appeared at the prison as Paul had demanded. They had no doubt been terrified at the intimation that the men they had thus injured were citizens of Rome, whose persons, as such, were inviolable. Hence it is on record that the simple expression, "I am a Roman citizen" (*civis Romanus sum*), often sufficed in even the most distant and barbarous countries, to repress all violence against the persons who were able to use it; for Rome had made it widely known how well she was able, and how fully she was disposed to resent any injury offered to her citizens. But that a Roman citizen should have been scourged at all, much more scourged unheard, in a Roman colony, and by order of Roman magistrates, was an enormity which would have excited astonishment and indignation, wherever heard of, in every Roman breast, and would in all probability be sternly noticed at Rome. Hence the praetors yielded to the demands of Paul, being probably but too glad to escape so cheaply from the consequences of a fault so serious. They came, therefore, and, apologizing for their mistake, and declaring their conviction of the apostles' innocence, led them forth from the prison—only politely intimating that it might, under the circumstances, be desirable that they should retire from the city at their earliest convenience. With this hint Paul and Silas thought proper to comply; and after they had been to the house of Lydia, and spoken encouragingly to the brethren, they took their departure from Philippi.

It has been asked why Paul and Silas (who, it appears, was also a citizen of Rome) did not urge their civic rights in order to prevent their punishments. The best answer seems to be, that the haste and clamor allowed them no opportunity, and would not permit them to be heard.

And if it be asked what use there was in urging this claim afterwards, when their liberation was already secured without it, it may be answered that there is every reason why a man who has been wrongfully treated should claim his liberation as a right, and refuse to receive it as a pardon or a favor. If Paul had departed secretly, it might have been reported that he had broken from prison, which would have tainted his reputation, and have been injurious to his apostolic authority there and elsewhere. He was, moreover, bound both by civil and natural right to maintain his privileges, which he could not, without damage to others, suffer to be injuriously affected in his person. He had also special regard, as Doddridge observes, to the interests of Christianity in this place; "for such a token of public respect from the magistrates would undoubtedly encourage the new converts, and remove a stumbling block out of the way of others, who might not have discerned the true value of the characters of Paul and Silas in the midst of so much injury as they had before suffered." It may be added, that the form of acknowledgement which Paul demanded, was not only just in itself, but particularly suitable to the place where it was made; for we learn that it was, especially among the Macedonians, thought a mark of innocence for any one to be publicly set free by the magistrates.

We find magistrates and others, here and elsewhere, readily yielding credence to Paul's assertion of his citizenship. It may be that he was in possession of some document to substantiate the claim; but if not, it may be explained by the fact, that no one would make such a claim lightly, as it was a capital offence to make an untrue pretension to the rights of citizenship.

It appears from the epistle which Paul addressed to this church about ten years after, from Rome, that its members continued to cherish the most affectionate regard for him. Among the modes in which they evinced this, was that of sending contributions towards his subsistence. And this was a rare distinction; for there seems to have been no other church from whom he received or would accept this kind of assistance, as he often chose rather to labor with his own hands than to lay himself open to the slightest suspicion of interested motives.

**Acts 16:21 and are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans."**

NET Acts 16:21 and are advocating customs that are not lawful for us to accept or practice, since we are Romans."

GNT Acts 16:21 κα καταγγ λλουσιν θη ο κ ξεστιν μ ν παραδ χεσθαι ο δ ποιε ν ωμα οισ ο σιν.

NLT Acts 16:21 "They are teaching customs that are illegal for us Romans to practice."

ESV Acts 16:21 They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice."

CSB Acts 16:21 and are promoting customs that are not legal for us as Romans to adopt or practice."

NIV Acts 16:21 by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice."

- Acts 26:3 Jer 10:3
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## VAGUE CHARGES ENOUGH TO CONVICT

**And are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans-** The custom they were proclaiming was the Gospel. The charges were vague but were sufficient to get them convicted and probably reflected the anti-Semitic bias in this predominantly Gentile city.

**Proclaiming** (2605) (**kataggello** from **kata** = an intensifier, down + **aggelos** = messenger and **aggello** = to declare, report) literally means to "declare down". It means to announce, with focus upon the extent to which the proclamation extends and thus to proclaim throughout. It has the added nuance of to declare plainly, openly and loudly! It was used of solemn religious messages.

**Customs** (habit)(1485)(**ethos** from **etho** = to be used, to be accustomed) refers to a usual or customary manner of behavior, habit, pattern of behavior which is more or less fixed by tradition or the usual practice. It may be established by law or otherwise generally sanctioned by the society.

**NET Note - Customs** that are not lawful for us to accept or practice. Ironically, the charges are similar to those made against Jesus in Luke 23:2, where Jews argued he was "twisting" their customs. The charge has three elements: (1) a racial element (Jewish); (2) a social element (unlawful); and (3) a traditional element (not their customs).

In the Roman Empire, there were two very different laws: one for citizens of the Roman Empire, and one for those who were not citizens. Roman citizens had specific civil rights which were zealously guarded. Non-citizens had no civil rights, and were subject to the whims of both the multitude and the magistrates.

**MacArthur** points out that the charge of **proclaiming customs...not lawful** was "technically true. There was a law forbidding Roman citizens to practice any foreign religion that had not been sanctioned by the state, although this law was rarely enforced. But the charge that the missionaries were creating mass confusion in the city was false. It had its basis not in fact but in anger over lost profits." (Ibid)

**Bruce** comments "There was great indignation that Roman citizens should be molested by strolling peddlers of an outlandish religion. Such people had to be taught to know their proper place and not trouble their betters."

**A T Robertson** - Note the sharp contrast between "being Jews" in verse 20 and "being Romans" here. This pose of patriotism is all sound and fury. It is love of money that moves these "masters" far more than zeal for Rome. As Roman citizens in a colony they make full use of all their rights of protest. Judaism was a religio licita in the Roman empire, only they were not allowed to make proselytes of the Romans themselves. No Roman magistrate would pass on abstract theological questions (18:15), but only if a breach of the peace was made ( καταρασσουσιν μων την πολιν [ektarassousin hēmōn tēn polin]) or the formation of secret sects and organizations. Evidently both of these last points are involved by the charges of "unlawful customs" by the masters who are silent about their real ground of grievance against Paul and Silas. **θος** [Ethos] (kin to **θος** [ēthos], 1 Cor. 15:33) is from **θω** [ethō], to be accustomed or used to a thing. The Romans granted toleration to conquered nations to follow their religious customs provided they did not try to win the Romans. But the Jews had made great headway to favour (the God-fearers) with increasing hatred also. Emperor worship had in store grave peril for both Jews and Christians. The Romans will care more for this than for the old gods and goddesses. It will combine patriotism and piety.

**Vincent on Being Romans.** - The Romans granted absolute toleration to conquered nations to follow their own religious customs, and took the gods of these countries under their protection. Otho, Domitian, Commodus, and Caracalla were zealous partisans of the worship of Isis; Serapis and Cybele were patronized at Rome; and in the reign of Nero the religious dilettanti at Rome affected Judaism, and professed to honor the name of Moses and the sacred books. Poppaea, Nero's consort, was their patroness, and

Seneca said, "the Jewish faith is now received on every hand. The conquered have given laws to the conquerors." On the other hand, there were laws which forbade the introduction of strange deities among the Romans themselves. In 186 B.C., when stringent measures were taken by the government for the repression of Bacchanalian orgies in Rome, one of the consuls, addressing an assembly of the people, said: "How often in the ages of our fathers was it given in charge to the magistrates to prohibit the performance of any foreign religious rites; to banish strolling sacrificers and soothsayers from the forum, the circus, and the city; to search for and burn books of divination; and to abolish every mode of sacrificing that was not conformable to the Roman practice" (Livy, xxxix., 16). It was contrary to strict Roman law for the Jews to propagate their opinions among the Romans, though they might make proselytes of other nations.

**Kent Hughes** - Whenever the preaching of the gospel touches the economic structure of the powers that be, opposition is bound to come. Richard Collier, the historian of the Salvation Army, says: "*Persecution was great from the beginning.... Gangs frequently hurled mud and stones through the windows at the preaching and the crowd. The liquor dealers worked hard to have Booth kicked out of East London. The police were no help; in fact, they often broke up outdoor meetings and accused Booth's followers of being the cause of all the trouble.... Beatings were not uncommon: in 1889, at least 669 Salvation Army members were assaulted—some were killed and many were maimed. Even children were not immune; ruffians threw lime in the eyes of a child of a Salvation Army member. The newspapers ridiculed Booth. PUNCH referred to him as "Field Marshal von Booth."* Paul had touched the profiteers' hearts. The problem was, their hearts were in their wallets. In the ensuing melee, false charges and racial innuendo were arrayed against Paul and Silas, and their arrest followed.... Note how quickly the devil changed tactics. When subterfuge did not work, he tried outward persecution. Both are effective, though the latter sometimes backfires. "The blood of martyrs is the seed of the church." The forces of darkness were not at their smartest when they turned so quickly to persecution." (Preaching the Word - Acts - The Church Afire)

**Acts 16:22 The crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them and proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods.**

- **the crowd:** Ac 17:5 Acts 18:12 Acts 19:28-41 Acts 21:30,31 Acts 22:22,23
- **the chief magistrates :** Acts 16:37 Acts 5:40 Acts 22:24-26 Mt 10:17 27:26 2Co 6:5 11:23-25 1Th 2:2 Heb 11:36 1Pe 2:24
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **MOB ACTION AGAINST MISSIONARIES**

**The crowd rose up together against them** - Luke describes a mob scene.

**Rose up** ([4911](#))(**sunephistemi** from **sun/syn** = together which speaks of intimate association + **ephistemi** = stand upon, be at hand, stand before, by or over) literally is "to stand up together" and means to join in an uprising or an attack.

Luke adds the preposition **katá** which means against so the idea is that the crowd made an assault together against them. This is a clear example of mob violence.

A closely related verb **sunistemi** (sun + histemi) is used in the Septuagint to the assembly of Israel rising up against Moses the servant of the Lord...

And **they assembled together** against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, "You have gone far enough, for all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the LORD is in their midst; so why do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?" (Nu 16:3)

**A T Robertson** - There was no actual attack of the mob as Paul and Silas were in the hands of the officers, but a sudden and violent uprising of the people, the appeal to race and national prejudice having raised a ferment.

**The chief magistrates tore their robes off them** - Some think "them" is the Gentile officials but more like it was the robes of the accused.

**MacArthur** notes that "Caught up in the mob's anti-Semitic frenzy, the **chief magistrates** failed miserably to uphold the highly prized standards of Roman justice. They did not bother to investigate the charges, conduct a proper hearing, or give Paul and Silas a chance to defend themselves (which would have revealed, first of all, that they were Roman citizens)." (MacArthur New Testament Commentary – Acts)

The **chief magistrates** tore their robes off them - Moved by the incited crowd and the false accusations, the magistrates acted

rashly and did not investigate the matter fully as they should have. Their neglect later brought them embarrassment for it was to imprison Roman citizens without a trial (and Paul was a Roman citizen).

**Chief Magistrates** (4755) see above for **strategos**

Every Roman colony had two of these men serving as judges. In this case, they did not uphold Roman justice: They did not investigate the charges, conduct a proper hearing, or give Paul and Silas the chance to defend themselves.

## STRIPPED TO BE STRIPED!

**Tore off** (4048) (**perirregnumi** from **perí** = about + **rhegunimi** = to break, tear) means literally to tear from around someone, as tearing off fetters or stripping off one's robe by tearing. This verb is used in the NT only of garments as the crowd tore off the clothes of Paul and Silas preparing them to be scourged. The Roman custom was to allow officers to tear off the clothes of criminals before being scourged. This is the only use in the

**A T Robertson** - The **duumvirs** probably gave orders for Paul and Silas to be stripped of their outer garments ( **ματια** [himatia]), though not actually doing it with their own hands, least of all not stripping off their own garments in horror as Ramsay thinks. That would call for the middle voice. In 2 Macc. 4:38 the active voice is used as here of stripping off the garments of others. Paul in 1 Thess. 2:2 refers to the shameful treatment received in Philippi, "insulted" ([hubristhentas]). As a Roman citizen this was unlawful, but the duumvirs looked on Paul and Silas as vagabond and seditious Jews and "acted with the highhandedness characteristic of the fussy provincial authorities" (Knowling).

**And proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods** - This is part of counting the cost for being a Gospel proclaimer. **Proceeded to order** is in the **imperfect tense** which speaks of ongoing or repeated action in the past. In Jewish legal tradition, there was a maximum number of blows that could be delivered when beating a person ("40 less one" - they would stop at 39 to make sure they did not go over), but the Romans had no such limit. We can rest assured Paul and Silas were severely beaten.

**MacArthur** - Each lictor carried a bundle of rods tied together--ironically, as a symbol of Roman law and justice. With those rods they brutally beat the men, a punishment Paul endured three times (2 Cor. 11:25). (Ibid)

As we find out in Acts 16:37+, the magistrate's order was blatantly illegal.

**THOUGHT** - Why did not Paul use this defense to keep from being beaten and imprisoned? I cannot say, but clearly God had a providential appointment with a pagan jailer. This is another great example of Genesis 50:20 and Romans 8:28 and underscores the truth that God is in full control even when the situation seems to be in confusion (like the mob) and out of control! It behooves us all to be on the lookout for what God is doing in those situations where unexpected confusion or unfair treatment ensues. God is very purposeful and does not waste opportunities. We just need eyes of faith to see those opportunities instead of grumbling. Had Paul and Silas grumbled it is very unlikely they would have missed their "God opportunity."

**Proceeded to order** (2753)(**keleuo**) means to set in motion, urge on. In the NT, used generally with the meaning of to command, order something to be done. Imperfect active, repeatedly ordered. The usual formula of command was: "Go, **lictors**; (the "policemen" in Acts 16:35, 38) strip off their garments; let them be scourged!" **Louw-Nida** - to state with force and/or authority what others must do—"to order, to command."

**Keleuo** - 25x in 25v - Usage: **command(2), commanded(4), gave orders(2), give orders(1), giving orders(1), order(2), ordered(12), ordering(2).**

Matt. 8:18; Matt. 14:9; Matt. 14:19; Matt. 14:28; Matt. 18:25; Matt. 27:58; Matt. 27:64; Lk. 18:40; Acts 4:15; Acts 5:34; Acts 8:38; Acts 12:19; Acts 16:22; Acts 21:33; Acts 21:34; Acts 22:24; Acts 22:30; Acts 23:3; Acts 23:10; Acts 23:35; Acts 25:6; Acts 25:17; Acts 25:21; Acts 25:23; Acts 27:43

Used many times in the Apocrypha -

Es. 9:53; Jdt. 2:15; Jdt. 12:1; Tob. 8:18; 1 Ma. 11:23; 2 Ma. 1:20; 2 Ma. 1:21; 2 Ma. 1:31; 2 Ma. 2:1; 2 Ma. 2:4; 2 Ma. 5:12; 2 Ma. 7:5; 2 Ma. 9:7; 2 Ma. 13:12; 2 Ma. 14:27; 2 Ma. 14:31; 2 Ma. 14:41; 2 Ma. 15:4; 3 Ma. 5:2; 3 Ma. 5:16; 3 Ma. 6:30; 4 Ma. 8:2; 4 Ma. 8:12; 4 Ma. 9:11; 4 Ma. 10:17; Sut. 1:32; Sut. 1:56; Bel. 1:14;

**To be beaten with rods** - as opposed to fists or clubs (see **fascēs** and **picture of a bundle of rods**). In the Septuagint, the Greek word for **rod** (rhabdos) was used of a shepherd's club. It was also used of a staff for a walking stick as would be used by a traveler or by an old man ( better described as a cane.) In any event this seems to be a fairly solidly object which would have been able to

inflict significant pain and muscular damage (with bruising and bleeding -- and we all know how painful bleeding into a muscle can be!). Also note "**beaten with rods**" is in the [present tense](#) which speaks of ongoing action!

What is interesting is that Luke records no complaints from Paul or Silas, which reminds me of Luke's description of the punishment of the apostles in Acts 5:40-41+

They (Jewish leaders - Acts 5:27) took his (Gamaliel's) advice; and after calling the apostles in, they flogged (beat or scourged so as to take off the skin) them and ordered them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and then released them. So they went on their way from the presence of the Council, **rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name.**

**Comment** - What an illustration of the power of being filled with the Spirit (Gal 5:22 His fruits is "love, joy, peace, patience, etc) and enabled to manifest His supernatural fruit of joy in a naturally unjoyful circumstance! May we all be continually filled, because you can never tell when the enemy will inflict a beating (either physically or with words).

**A T Robertson** - Why did not Paul say here that he was a Roman citizen as he does later (Acts 16:37) and in Jerusalem (Acts 22:26f.)? It might have done no good in this hubbub and no opportunity was allowed for defence of any kind.

**Beaten with rods** (4463)(**rhabidizo** from **rhabdos** = rod for scourging) means to beat with a rod or stick and in the NT is used only of Roman punishment by scourging. This punishment was referred to by the Latin term fustigatio and was distinguished from catigatio (a lashing) and verberatio (flogging with chains). As Paul records (see below) this punishment was inflicted on his body on three separate occasions although this is the only one the NT specifically records in detail.

It is interesting that in the Septuagint, **rhabdizo** is used of threshing wheat to remove the chaff from the grain...

So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. (see **note** Ruth 2:17)

Then the angel of the LORD came and sat under the oak that was in Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezrite as his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the wine press in order to save it from the Midianites. (see **note** Judges 6:11)

Paul alluded to this (and possibly other similar events) as he defended his ministry to the saints at Corinth asking...

Are they (false apostles, deceitful workers who were disguising themselves as apostles of Christ) servants of Christ? (I speak as if insane) I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death. 24 Five times I received from the Jews thirty-nine lashes. 25 Three times I **was beaten with rods**, once I was stoned, three times I was shipwrecked, a night and a day I have spent in the deep. (2 Corinthians 11:23-25)

Later in Acts Paul does in fact appeal to his Roman citizenship, once to avoid being scourged (Acts 22:25-29) and another time to force the officials to send him to Rome as he appealed to Caesar (Acts 25:11-12) Festus' suggestion that Paul appear in Jerusalem for trial (Acts 25:9) provoked his appeal to Caesar for he realized that the trial would not be impartial especially in Jerusalem, and that he would be in great danger if he was returned to the jurisdiction of the Sanhedrin. The right of appeal was one of the most ancient and cherished rights of a Roman citizen. And to whom ultimately did Paul appeal? To the infamous, nefarious Nero who was emperor at that time (A.D. 54-68)!

**Jack Andrews** - **Illustration**: At a religious festival in a South American country, a series of booths lined the midway. One booth sold trinkets and necklaces.

Printed on the front of the booth was a sign that said, "Cheap crosses here!"

Many Christians today are looking for cheap crosses.

They want discipleship without demand and sanctification without sacrifice!

Following Jesus and serving Jesus will often get you in hot water with people who oppose the truth and serve Satan. Richard Collier, the historian of the Salvation Army, wrote, "Persecution was great from the beginning... Gangs frequently hurled mud and stones through the windows at the preaching and the crowd. The liquor dealers worked hard to have Booth kicked out of East London. The police were no help; in fact, they often broke up outdoor meetings and accused Booth's followers of being the cause of all the trouble... Beatings were not uncommon: in 1889, at least 669 Salvation Army members were assaulted—some were killed and many were maimed. Even children were not immune; ruffians threw lime in the eyes of a child of a Salvation Army member. The newspapers ridiculed Booth. PUNCH referred to him as "Field Marshal von Booth." (Jack Andrews Expository Studies –



### **Acts 16:16-24 "Singing in the Prison" Allen Ross**

I do not suppose that Paul and Silas were particularly happy about being in prison. What had happened to them that day was something no one would want to have happen.

Paul had cast a demon out of a girl who had been used to foretell things. And when those ruthless people saw that their enterprise was now gone, they brought false charges against Paul. When the mob got involved, then the magistrates had Paul and Silas severely flogged and put in prison. They were not simply in a prison cell--they were in the inner cell, and their feet in stocks (Acts 16:16-24).

So what did they do? Acts 16:25 says, "About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them." Amazing! But here is a good example of the difference between being happy and rejoicing. Happiness depends to a large extent on what happens. No one could be "happy" under those conditions. And to put a false appearance of happiness on was probably not going to work. But rejoicing is another matter entirely, because it is based on an inner sense of being right with God. Paul and Silas were in prison, but for a right reason--because they had been doing what God wanted them to do (it would have been altogether different if they had been put in prison for some crime). Jesus had said, "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness" (Matt. 5:10). These men knew that if they were suffering for righteousness' sake they were pleasing God, and that meant they could rejoice--and pray of course that they would be released.

In Philippians 4:4 Paul wrote, "Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!" Where was Paul when he wrote that? You guessed it--in prison again. Philippians is one of the so-called prison epistles (see Php 1:14).

No one wants to be flogged and to be thrown into prison. But if in serving Christ it happens, then there is reason for rejoicing in the Lord. Paul and Silas were strong in their faith because they had been doing what was right and found opposition from the world, as Jesus said they would. So now they sang and prayed--and others in prison heard them. Here was a great witness. People would see that there is a higher power than Rome, a greater king than Caesar, and a faith that overcomes the world. The servant of the Lord can rejoice always, knowing that he or she is right with God. And in any adverse situation that comes as a result of it, such a servant can use the faith to bring glory to God in the sight of others.

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### **James Smith - THE JAILOR'S CONVERSION Acts 16:16-40**

These incidents remind us of a picture gallery, where you have different scenes grouped together, and that, perhaps, strike you most by way of contrast Shall we look at each separately?

**1. A Picture of Demonic Possession.** "A damsel possessed with a spirit of divination" (v. 16). How sad to think of this nice-looking young woman, wholly given over to the control of a deceitful, wicked spirit. She was the property of several sin-hardened wretches, who probably sold her half-mad ravings as the oracles of God. What she cried after the apostles on their way to the prayer meeting was quite true (v. 17), but then the words had such a hollow, fiendish ring about them that "grieved" Paul; so, by faith in the name of Jesus Christ, he "commanded the evil spirit to come out of her."

**2. A Picture of Selfishness and Cruelty (Acts 16:19-24).** "When her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone," because the poor girl was now delivered from the soul-maddening power of the devil, instead of being thankful to God for such an emancipation, and because her salvation touched their pockets, they sought the ruin of the servants of God. "The love of money is the root of all evil." The spirit that possessed her masters was no better than the spirit which possessed the deluded damsel; for greed of gain they would traffic in the souls of their fellow-creatures.

**3. A Picture of Heaven-Born Happiness.** "Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God" (Acts 16:24). Although lying in the deepest, darkest hole of that miserable prison, with bleeding backs and aching limbs, the joy of the Lord so filled their hearts that they were able also to "glory in tribulation." What but the grace of God could make anyone sing in such circumstances. "The prisoners heard them." Might not this have been one of the reasons why God permitted His servants to be cast into prison. These fellow-prisoners also share in the victory which God wrought, for "everyone's bonds were loosed."

**4. A Picture of Divine Intervention.** "Suddenly there was a great earthquake," etc. Paul and Silas resisted the devil in the damsel, but no doubt they prayed for those who had despitely used them and persecuted them (Matt. 5:44). Having calmly and joyfully trusted in God, the mighty, wonder-working hand of God is now stretched out for their deliverance. Truly, when they prayed "the place was shaken." This was a fulfilment of Psalm 10:15.

**5. A Picture of Sudden Conversion (Acts 16:27-31).** It was a very dark moment in the experience of the jailor when he drew out his sword intending to commit suicide; but it was immediately followed by the brightest experience he ever had. "He called for a light"

that might guide his feet into the inner prison of the suffering saints, but when he cried, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" he was calling for another light that might guide his feet into the paths of righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Then they told him words whereby he and all his house should be saved (v. 31). Just as he had been saved from self-destruction through the word of the apostle— "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here"—so can he be saved from the power of sin and the wrath of God by "believing on the Lord Jesus Christ" (John 3:16).

**6. A Picture of Joyful Fellowship (Acts 16:32-34)** What a change. A few hours before this the jailor was fastening their feet in the terrible stocks. Now he is bathing their wounds, taking them into his house, and spreading the best he has before them, eating with them, "and rejoicing, believing in God with all his house." He had been suddenly awakened out of his sleep, but now he was at one with the servants of God, and with them enjoying an early hallelujah breakfast— such a scene as would do credit to a modern Salvation Army "glory feast."

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#### **Acts 16:22-29 Praise—Even In Pain By Vernon C. Grounds**

[God] has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. —Ephesians 1:3

Terry Waite, a courageous British negotiator during an international hostage crisis, had gone to Lebanon to arrange the release of prisoners. But he himself was arrested and detained in solitary confinement.

Through long, lonely days and nights, he was unsure that his life would be spared. Nevertheless, every morning he offered as his own a prayer written in 1596 by Queen Elizabeth I. In it he expressed "most humble and hearty thanks for manifold mercies so abundantly bestowed upon me as well as for my creation, preservation, regeneration, and all other of Thy benefits and great mercies exhibited in Jesus Christ."

Is this how we react to hardships? When troubles engulf us, we plead with God for relief from suffering, for healing of disease, for comfort, for strength, and for the supply of our needs. Such petitions are certainly legitimate, and we should bring them to the Father. But do we remember, as Paul and Silas did from the depths of a jail cell, to offer thanks for God's lovingkindness? (Acts 16:25). Do we praise God for giving us life itself, as well as the blessed promise of eternal life?

When we acknowledge God's great mercies, we are able to offer Him praise—even in pain.

When upon life's billows you are tempest-tossed,  
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,  
Count your many blessings—name them one by one,  
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done. —Oatman

Praise comes naturally when you count your blessings.

**Acts 16:23 When they had struck them with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely;**

- **they threw them into prison** : Ac 5:18 8:3 9:2 12:4 Lu 21:12 Eph 3:1 4:1 2Ti 2:9 Phm 1:9 Rev 1:9 Rev 2:10
- **to guard them securely** : Ac 5:23 12:18 1Sa 23:22,23 Mt 26:48 27:63-66
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **GOD'S MISSIONARIES BEATEN AND IMPRISONED**

One is reminded of Paul's last words in 2 Ti 2:9+ "for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal; but the **word of God** is not imprisoned." You can put the missionaries in prison but you cannot prevent God's Gospel from going forth because it has intrinsic, supernatural power. Do you believe that?

Paul (based on experiences such as this on in Philippi) would later warn Timothy with a promise you probably won't find in most books that collect "God's Promises!"

Indeed, **all** who desire to live godly in (the only way possible to live godly is to abide **IN** the Vine) Christ Jesus will be persecuted. (2 Ti 3:12+)

**When they had struck them with many blows** - This sounds like more than 40 blows! They were beaten severely! Use your imagination - no clothes and beaten with rods! Compare Paul's testimony in

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

**Many blows** (many stripes) - The Jewish law was forty stripes save one (2 Cor. 11:24). The Roman custom depended on the caprice of the judge and was a terrible ordeal. It was the custom to inflict the stripes on the naked body (back)

**Jack Arnold** - Logic was cast to the wind. Emotions took over. This was a lynch mob who were ready to kill the missionaries even without a trial. According to Roman law, a man to be beaten was stripped down to his underwear (loin cloth), exposing his back and legs. Then with canes or ropes about three-quarter inches thick, the victim was beaten until the back was bloody and raw. ([sermon](#))

**Blows** (4127)(**plege** from **plesso** = to strike) means a literal blow as from some instrument like a whip (in plural = beating in Lk 12:48; cf Acts 16:23; 2 Cor 11:23). **Plege** described the result of the blows, and so referred to wound, bruise (Acts 16:33, Rev 13:14). The third sense of plege was to describe a sudden calamity causing severe distress such as a "blow" or "stroke" of judgment sent by God (plague, misfortune, calamity - Rev 9:18, 20; 18:4, 8; 22:18). In the Septuagint plege is used to describe the 10 plagues in Egypt (Ex 11:1) and the protection of the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and lintels of the Jewish homes that saved them from the "plague."

**Plege** is used in Leviticus in an interesting passage Lev 26:21+ where God warned Israel "If then, you act with hostility against Me and are unwilling to obey Me, I will increase the plague on you seven times according to your sins." Many think this 7x multiplier is reflected in the fact that after 70 years of exile, they still would be disobedient and so God promised "seventy sevens" (Da 9:24+) which is 490 (7 x 70)!

**Gilbrant** - Classical Greek The basic idea associated with plēgē is "blow" or "stroke," and it is so used in Greek literature from the earliest records (Liddell-Scott). By extension, plēgē has overtones of its basic meaning, which, when used in different contexts, may denote a "stroke of lightning" or "a stroke of an ax or sword." The poet Sophocles used the word in connection with someone who, in sorrow, "beats the breasts" (Electra 90). Other Greek authors employed the word in the sense of "stroke or impression made on the eyes or ears"; still others, "the impact of bodies and atoms" or "the beating of the pulse." As with many substantives there are metaphoric meanings. Plēgē means "blow or stroke of calamity," especially in reference to war. Some Greek poets used the word metaphorically in the sense of a "heaven-sent plague"; others, of the "sting of wasps" or a "bite." Septuagint Usage The Septuagint uses the substantive, not uncommon in classical Greek literature, for "plague," e.g., the 10 plagues sent by God (Exodus 11:1). Plēgē can also indicate the "losses" of an army (1 Samuel 4:17 [LXX 1 Kings 4:17]) or the "affliction" of Job (2:13). ([Complete Biblical Library - Incredible Resource](#))

**Plege** - 22x in 21v - beat\*(1), beaten(1), beatings(1), blows(1), flogging(1), plague(3), plagues(10), wound(3), wounds(1).

Lk. 10:30; Lk. 12:48; Acts 16:23; Acts 16:33; 2 Co. 6:5; 2 Co. 11:23; Rev. 9:18; Rev. 9:20; Rev. 11:6; Rev. 13:3; Rev. 13:12; Rev. 13:14; Rev. 15:1; Rev. 15:6; Rev. 15:8; Rev. 16:9; Rev. 16:21; Rev. 18:4; Rev. 18:8; Rev. 21:9; Rev. 22:18

**Plege** in the Septuagint -

Ex 11:1; Ex 12:13; Ex 33:5; Lev. 26:21; Nu 11:33; Nu 14:37; Nu 25:8; Nu 25:9; Nu 25:18; Nu 26:1; Nu 31:16; Dt. 25:2; Dt. 25:3; Dt. 28:59; Dt. 28:61; Dt. 29:22; Jos. 22:17; Jdg. 11:33; Jdg. 15:8; 1 Sa 4:8; 1 Sa 4:10; 1 Sa 4:17; 1 Sa 6:19; 1 Sa 14:14; 1 Sa 14:30; 1 Sa 19:8; 1 Sa 23:5; 1 Ki. 20:21; 1 Ki. 22:35; 2 Ki. 8:29; 2 Ki. 9:15; 1 Chr. 21:22; 2 Chr. 6:28; 2 Chr. 13:17; 2 Chr. 21:14; 2 Chr. 22:6; 2 Chr. 28:5; Job 2:13; Job 42:16; Ps. 64:7; Pr 20:30; Pr 22:8; Pr 29:15; Isa. 1:6; Isa. 10:24; Isa. 10:26; Isa. 14:6; Isa. 19:22; Isa. 30:26; Isa. 30:31; Isa. 53:3; Isa. 53:4; Isa. 53:10; Jer. 10:18; Jer. 10:19; Jer. 14:17; Jer. 15:18; Jer. 19:8; Jer. 30:12; Jer. 30:14; Jer. 30:17; Jer. 50:13; Mic. 1:9; Mic. 1:11; Nah. 3:19; Zech. 13:6;

**They threw them into prison** - This event might at first glance seem to signal the end of Paul's ministry in Philippi, but in God's providence it would not be so but would lead to another conversion. God's ways are always higher than our ways. Dear believer, are you in a "dungeon" because of your witness? Take heart from the example of Paul and Silas and by the power of the Spirit, rejoice. And again I say rejoice in the Lord. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing and give thanks for all things (see **notes** 1 Th 5:16; 17; 18)

Paul alludes to these hindrances to sharing the gospel in his letter to the Thessalonians writing that...

after we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition. (see **note** 1 Thessalonians 2:2)

It is fascinating that here in Acts 16:23 we find the very one who had been throwing Christians into jail, now in jail himself. Luke records...

But Saul (later Paul) began ravaging the church, entering house after house; and dragging off men and

women, he would put them in prison. (Acts 8:3+)

**Jailer** (1200)(**desmophulax** from **desmos** = bond, chain + **phulax** = keeper from **phulasso** = to guard) = keeper of bonds, in the N. T. only in Acts 16 (Acts 16:23, 27, 36) of the the government hired "jailer" responsible for Paul and Silas' safekeeping.

In the Septuagint of Ge 39:21–23, we have **archidesmophúlax**, the chief keeper of the prison.

**Guard** (5083)(**tereo** from **teros** - a guard or warden) means to keep an eye on, to keep something in view, to hold firmly, to attend carefully, or to watch over it (watchful care - Jesus' prayer to His Father for His disciples - Jn 17:11). **Tereo** speaks of watching over, of taking care of, of guarding something which is in one's possession keeping it from loss or injury.

**Securely** (806)(**aphalos**) refers to a state of safety and security, so that one is free from danger (safe, safely, secure, securely). Used in (Mark 14:44; Acts 16:23; Gen. 34:25), certainly, assuredly (Acts 2:36).

**Prison** (5438)(**phulake** from **phulasso** = to guard, watch) means a guarding (the act of guarding or keeping watch - Lk 2:8, Nu 1:53, 3:7, 28) or guard (the person doing the watching - Acts 12:10) , a prison as a place where someone is guarded (Mt 5:25, 14:3, 10, 18:30, 25:36, 39, 43, etc). **Phulake** can refer to the period during which a watch is kept (Mt 14:25, 24:43, Mk 6:48, Lk 12:38 - a watch of the night = Ancient Jews had 3 divisions of 4 hours each but under the Romans changed to 4 watches of 3 hours each, the 4th watch being between 3-6 in the morning). It has the root meaning of being kept under guard or on hold and is distinct from **desmoterion**, a place of bondage. **Phulake** can have a penal connotation but not in every use. **Phulake** is used of a holding cell pending trial. Some uses of **phulake** simply mean "a watch" as in watching over (Mt 14:25, Lk 2:8) The last use of Phulake describes Satan's holding tank before he is released, fully defeated and cast into the lake of fire (Rev 20:7-note). Thus, this speaks of a place of *involuntary confinement*, not merely a "haunt, den, [or] refuge." Paul used phulake to describe his imprisonments (2 Cor 6:5). In Revelation 18:2-note Babylon is described figuratively the final refuge, the place of banishment for unclean spirits, "a dwelling place of demons and a **prison** of every unclean spirit."

A derivative word **gazophulakion** refers to a treasury, a place of deposit for the public treasure, e.g., where the Jews kept the sacred treasury in the court of the Temple (Lxx Neh 10:37, 38, 13:4, 5, 7, 8).

The word **phylactery** is related to **phulake/phulasso** - phylacteries (Tefillim) were small boxes of parchment on which were written certain portions of the Law and then bound on their forehead and wrist (Mt 23:5). Their original purpose was to remind the Jews to obey the Law but by Jesus' time the Jews had begun to regard them as charms that would protect them from evil, much like they had done with the bronze serpent (compare Nu 21:8-9 with 2 Ki 18:4, 700-800 years later, missing Who the bronze serpent was pointing to - Jn 3:14-15)

**Phulake** - 47x in 45v - Usage: guard(1), imprisonment(1), imprisonments(2), prison(34), prisons(3), time of the night(1), watch(4).

Matthew 5:25 "Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.

Matthew 14:3 For when Herod had John arrested, he bound him and put him in prison because of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip.

Matthew 14:10 He sent and had John beheaded in the prison.

Matthew 14:25 And in the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea.

Matthew 18:30 "But he was unwilling and went and threw him in prison until he should pay back what was owed.

Matthew 24:43 "But be sure of this, that if the head of the house had known at what time of the night the thief was coming, he would have been on the alert and would not have allowed his house to be broken into.

Matthew 25:36 naked, and you clothed Me; I was sick, and you visited Me; I was in prison, and you came to Me.'

Matthew 25:39 'When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?'

Matthew 25:43 I was a stranger, and you did not invite Me in; naked, and you did not clothe Me; sick, and in prison, and you did not visit Me.'

Matthew 25:44 "Then they themselves also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry, or thirsty, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not take care of You?'

Mark 6:17 For Herod himself had sent and had John arrested and bound in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, because he had married her.

Mark 6:27 Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded him to bring back his head. And he went and had him beheaded in the prison,

Mark 6:48 Seeing them straining at the oars, for the wind was against them, at about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea; and He intended to pass by them.

Luke 2:8 In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night.

Luke 3:20 Herod also added this to them all: he locked John up in prison.

Luke 12:38 "Whether he comes in the second watch, or even in the third, and finds them so, blessed are those slaves.

Luke 12:58 "For while you are going with your opponent to appear before the magistrate, on your way there make an effort to settle with him, so that he may not drag you before the judge, and the judge turn you over to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison.

Luke 21:12 "But before all these things, they will lay their hands on you and will persecute you, delivering you to the synagogues and prisons, bringing you before kings and governors for My name's sake.

Luke 22:33 But he said to Him, "Lord, with You I am ready to go both to prison and to death!"

Luke 23:19 (He was one who had been thrown into prison for an insurrection made in the city, and for murder.)

Luke 23:25 And he released the man they were asking for who had been thrown into prison for insurrection and murder, but he delivered Jesus to their will.

John 3:24 for John had not yet been thrown into prison.

Acts 5:19 But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and taking them out he said,

Acts 5:22 But the officers who came did not find them in the prison; and they returned and reported back,

Acts 5:25 But someone came and reported to them, "The men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!"

Acts 8:3 But Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house, and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison.

Acts 12:4 When he had seized him, he put him in prison, delivering him to four squads of soldiers to guard him, intending after the Passover to bring him out before the people.

Acts 12:5 So Peter was kept in the prison, but prayer for him was being made fervently by the church to God.

Acts 12:6 On the very night when Herod was about to bring him forward, Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains, and guards in front of the door were watching over the prison.

Acts 12:10 When they had passed the first and second guard, they came to the iron gate that leads into the city, which opened for them by itself; and they went out and went along one street, and immediately the angel departed from him.

Acts 12:17 But motioning to them with his hand to be silent, he described to them how the Lord had led him out of the prison. And he said, "Report these things to James and the brethren." Then he left and went to another place.

Acts 16:23 When they had struck them with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely;

Acts 16:24 and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

Acts 16:27 When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.

Acts 16:37 But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out."

Acts 16:40 They went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia, and when they saw the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.

Acts 22:4 "I persecuted this Way to the death, binding and putting both men and women into prisons,

Acts 26:10 "And this is just what I did in Jerusalem; not only did I lock up many of the saints in prisons, having received authority from the chief priests, but also when they were being put to death I cast my vote against them.

2 Corinthians 6:5 in beatings, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in sleeplessness, in hunger,

2 Corinthians 11:23 Are they servants of Christ?-- I speak as if insane-- I more so; in far more labors, in far more imprisonments, beaten times without number, often in danger of death.

Hebrews 11:36 and others experienced mockings and scourgings, yes, also chains and imprisonment.

1 Peter 3:19 in which also He went and made proclamation to the spirits now in prison,

Revelation 2:10 'Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to cast some of you into prison, so that you will be tested, and you will have tribulation for ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.

Revelation 18:2 And he cried out with a mighty voice, saying, "Fallen, fallen is Babylon the great! She has become a dwelling place of demons and a prison of every unclean spirit, and a prison of every unclean and hateful bird.

Revelation 20:7 When the thousand years are completed, Satan will be released from his prison,

**Phulake** - 121x in 110v in the Septuagint -

Gen. 40:3; Gen. 40:4; Gen. 40:7; Gen. 41:10; Gen. 42:17; Gen. 42:19; Gen. 42:30; Exod. 14:24; Lev. 24:12; Num. 1:53; Num. 3:7; Num. 3:8; Num. 3:25; Num. 3:28; Num. 3:31; Num. 3:32; Num. 3:36; Num. 3:38; Num. 4:28; Num. 4:32; Num. 8:26; Num. 9:19; Num. 9:23; Num. 15:34; Num. 18:3; Num. 18:4; Num. 18:5; Num. 31:30; Num. 31:47; Jdg. 7:19; Jdg. 16:21; Jdg. 16:25; 1 Sam. 11:11; 2 Sam. 20:3; 1 Ki. 2:3; 1 Ki. 22:27; 2 Ki. 11:5; 2 Ki. 11:6; 2 Ki. 11:7; 2 Ki. 17:4; 2 Ki. 25:27; 2 Ki. 25:29; 1 Chr. 9:19; 1 Chr. 9:27; 1 Chr. 12:29; 1 Chr. 23:32; 1 Chr. 26:16; 2 Chr. 7:6; 2 Chr. 8:14; 2 Chr. 13:11; 2 Chr. 16:10; 2 Chr. 18:26; 2 Chr. 23:6; 2 Chr. 35:2; Neh. 3:25; Neh. 12:39; Neh. 12:45; Job 7:12; Job 35:10; Ps. 39:1; Ps. 77:4; Ps. 90:4; Ps. 130:5; Ps. 141:3; Ps. 142:7; Prov. 4:23; Prov. 20:28; Isa. 42:7; Jer. 32:2; Jer. 32:8; Jer. 32:12; Jer. 33:1; Jer. 37:4; Jer. 37:15; Jer. 37:18; Jer. 37:21; Jer. 38:6; Jer. 38:13; Jer. 38:28; Jer. 39:14; Jer. 39:15; Jer. 51:12; Jer. 52:33; Lam. 2:19; Ezek. 19:9; Ezek. 23:24; Ezek. 40:45; Ezek. 40:46; Ezek. 44:8; Ezek. 44:14; Ezek. 44:15; Ezek. 44:16; Ezek. 48:11; Dan. 4:17; Dan. 4:25; Hab. 2:1

**Gilbrant on phulake** - Classical Greek - This word, which appears as early as Homer (Eighth Century B.C.) and throughout the classical period, essentially has four senses: (1) "guarding" as an action; (2) "a guard" made up of persons; (3) "a prison" as a place of guarding; and (4) "a watch in the night," that is, a division of time (e.g., Herodotus 9:51; cf. Liddell-Scott). Septuagint Usage - In the Septuagint the same wide range of meanings is attested—as evidenced by the various Hebrew words phulakē translates. Phulakē most often translates various forms of the root verb shāmar, "to watch, to guard," notably mishmār, "a prison." The papyri also attest this same variety of meaning (see Moulton-Milligan). (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

**Acts 16:24 and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.**

- the inner : 1Ki 22:27 Jer 37:15,16 38:26 La 3:53-55
- and made : 2Ch 16:10 \*Heb: Job 13:27 33:11 Ps 105:18 Jer 20:2 29:26
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## NO CHANCE OF ESCAPE

**Having received** (2983) (**lambano**) means to take or grasp. It can indicate both benevolent and hostile actions, and have as object either people or things; e.g. take a wife, collect taxes, accept a verdict, take a road, and figuratively take courage.

**Command** (instruction, orders) (3852) (**paraggelia** from **para** = beside, alongside + **aggello** = announce, tell, declare) literally describes the handing on of an announcement from one person to the side of another or the passing along of a message from one to another such as to what must be done. **Paraggelia** represents a directive from an authoritative source and was used of commands received from a superior and transmitted to others.

**Threw them into the inner prison** - **Threw** is the verb **ballo** which describes a powerful movement of throwing or propelling and gives us a vivid picture of how God's men were mistreated in every respect - just like their Master had been treated (cf John 15:20, 21, Mt 26:67, 27:30, Mk 14:65)! Satan is not playing games beloved! He hates the Gospel and the gospelizers! This is another reason we need to put on the full armor daily. The **inner prison** would be the most secure part of the prison and to further decrease their chance of escape they were placed in stocks. The chances of escape were near zero.

**THOUGHT** - Now it was time for God to act in one of the most dramatic prison breaks of all time! Isn't that often how He acts -- we see a situation as hopeless and somehow He comes to the rescue. Of course He does not always set us free from the stocks but if He doesn't, He will be there with us while we are in the "stocks" whatever they might be in our life! Read Hebrews 13:5 where there are 4 negatives piled up! And always provides grace in our place of weakness or distress (see 2 Cor 12:9+, 2 Cor 12:10+).

**A T Robertson on inner prison** - The Roman public prisons had a vestibule and outer prison and behind this the inner prison, a veritable dungeon with no light or air save what came through the door when open. One has only to picture modern cells in our jails,

the dungeons in feudal castles, London prisons before the time of Howard, to appreciate the horrors of an inner prison cell in a Roman provincial town of the first century A.D

**Bruce** commenting on the **stocks** writes that "These stocks had more than two holes for legs, which could thus be forced apart in a such a way as to cause the utmost discomfort and cramping pain. (Bruce)

**Jack Arnold** - Logic was cast to the wind. Emotions took over. This was a lynch mob who were ready to kill the missionaries even without a trial. According to Roman law, a man to be beaten was stripped down to his underwear (loin cloth), exposing his back and legs. Then with canes or ropes about three-quarter inches thick, the victim was beaten until the back was bloody and raw. ([sermon](#))

**Stocks** ([see picture](#) - fellow on left looks a little "Paulish!")([3586](#)) ([xulon](#)) means wood and in some contexts refers to a cross (Acts 5:30, 10:39, 13:29, 1 Pe 2:24+). In this context **xulon** describes an instrument that secured the feet (and sometimes the neck and hands) of a prisoner. **Stocks** were usually constructed of wood with holes to secure the feet. They could also be used as an instrument of torture by stretching the legs apart and causing the prisoner to sit in unnatural positions. The Romans often added chains along with the stocks. Stocks were much used in medieval and later times in the persecution of Christians.

The fact that **xulon** was also translated **cross**, brings to mind Jesus' charge to all who would desire to follow Him when He declared "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and **take up his cross** (synonym - stauros) and follow Me." (Mk 8:34) Paul and Silas were in a very real sense "taking up Jesus' cross" as they followed His example walking in His steps (1 Pe 2:21+).

- [Wikipedia article on stocks](#)

**Vincent on stocks** - Lit., the timber. An instrument of torture having five holes, four for the wrists and ankles and one for the neck. The same word is used for the cross, Acts 5:30; 10:39; Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 2:24.

The missionaries were between a rock and a hard place!

**Jack Andrews** - They were fastened securely after they had been flailed severely! (Ibid)

**Brian Bell** on Roman **stocks** - A Roman Instrument of torture w/more than two holes for the legs so that they could be forced widely apart unto apposition which soon became intolerably painful.

**Robertson** - In the stocks (eis to xulon). Xulo, from xuō, to scrape or plane, is used for a piece of wood whether a cross or gibbet (Acts 5:30; 10:39; 13:29; Gal. 3:13; 1 Peter 2:24) or a log or timber with five holes (four for the wrists and ankles and one for the neck) or two for the feet as here, xulopedē, Latin vervus, to shackle the feet stretched apart (Job 33:11). This torment was practiced in Sparta, Athens, Rome, and Adonirom Judson suffered it in Burmah. Xulon is also used in the N. T. for stick or staff (Matt. 26:47) and even a tree (Luke 23:31).

**MacArthur** rightly remarks "Like Herod (Acts 12:6-11+) and the Sanhedrin (Acts 5:19-25+) before them, the authorities at Philippi were to learn that no prison can hold those whom God wants released. Nor did this satanically inspired persecution intimidate Paul and Silas; it encouraged them to even further boldness. Writing of this incident to the Thessalonians, Paul said, "After we had already suffered and been mistreated in Philippi, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God amid much opposition" (1 Th 2:2). Paul's indomitable spirit, and joyous anticipation of being with Christ in heaven, gave him an almost reckless boldness in proclaiming the gospel. No amount of opposition could keep him from fulfilling his calling. Writing to the Philippians from prison in Rome, Paul rejoiced that his "circumstances [had] turned out for the greater progress of the gospel" (Phil. 1:12). Far from ending his ministry, that imprisonment saw it spread even to "those of Caesar's household" (Phil. 4:22). Paul could accept whatever suffering resulted from his ministry because he viewed himself as expendable. To the Philippians he wrote, "But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice and share my joy with you all" (Phil. 2:17). Paul and Silas manifested that same attitude of joy amid suffering while in prison at Philippi, turning persecution into praise." (Ibid)

**John G. Butler** wrote, "Churches, Christian schools, and other Christian organizations and endeavors will be restricted, limited, and suppressed while evil gets more and more freedom under such things as freedom of speech—a freedom which will not be applied to God's people and work. Already we are restricted in praying in school while evil is given more freedom than ever to propagate its evil in the schools. Christianity is being put in stocks while the abortionists, gamblers, homosexuals and other vile people are having more and more new laws passed to give them more freedom to propagate their evil."

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**Matt Chandler** (To Live is Christ, to Die is Gain) - As Westerners, when we think of "the stocks," we picture New England in the 1700's, the embarrassment and shame of having your head and hands stuck in a public contraption. But that is not what first-century Roman Empire stocks were like. These devious contraptions would contort the prisoner's body into all sorts of excruciating postures,

locking limbs and joints in place to the point of making the entire body cramp. The prisoner's body would seize up with searing pain, and then the Romans would just leave the person there for days.

Notice that the jailer is not commanded to treat his prisoners this way. The magistrates simply ask him to keep the missionaries safe, and instead he tortures them. So we aren't dealing with a very nice man at this moment. This jailer is very good at his job, and he probably likes it more than he should.

But when it comes to taking pride in one's work, this guy could not out-enjoy Paul. "About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them" (Acts 16:25). If you hated the gospel, wouldn't the apostle Paul be the most frustrating human being alive? It did not matter what anyone did to this man, he loved God and continued to show it in every possible way.

We see Paul's gospel fixation echoed throughout his letter to the Philippians. He is the man who when threatened says, "Well, to die is gain." In response his captors will say, "We'll torture you, then." He says, "I don't count the present suffering as worthy to even compare to the future glory." You can't win with a guy like this. If you want to kill him, he's cool with that because it means he gets to be with Jesus. If you want to make him suffer, he's cool with that, so long as it makes him like Jesus. If you want to let him live, he's fine with that, because to him, "to live is Christ." Paul is, as Richard Sibbes says of everyone united with Christ, a man who "can never be conquered."

Paul's stubborn fixation on Jesus is reminiscent of these words from the early church father John Chrysostom, who apparently was threatened with banishment if he did not renounce his faith:

If the empress wishes to banish me, let her do so; "the earth is the Lord's." If she wants to have me sawn asunder, I will have Isaiah for an example. If she wants me to be drowned in the ocean, I think of Jonah. If I am to be thrown in the fire, the three men in the furnace suffered the same. If cast before wild beasts, I remember Daniel in the lion's den. If she wants me to be stoned, I have before me Stephen, the first martyr. If she demands my head, let her do so; John the Baptist shines before me. Naked I came from my mother's womb, naked shall I leave this world. Paul reminds me, "If I still pleased men, I would not be the servant of Christ."

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**Our Daily Bread - "LED" INTO PRISON** - In a vision, Paul saw a man of Macedonia who said, "Come over ... and help us." Assured that the Lord Himself had thus called him to preach the Gospel in that area, he and Silas — and evidently Dr. Luke — set out at once for their new "mission field." But what a reception they received! The record tells us that the "multitude rose up together against them" and "beat them" and "thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks." If they would have reacted like many of us today, Paul would probably have complained, "Well, isn't this just fine: led by God into prison! Here we were obedient to the heavenly vision, and this is our reward!"

Was this Paul's attitude? I should say not! Listen to the story in Acts 16:25: "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God." Singing in prison! Paul knew that "all things work together for good to them that love God." With the eye of faith he could see some future good, and in that confidence was happy even while enduring severe trial. When the Lord had accomplished His purpose, demonstrated His power, and saved the jailer and his family, then Paul and Silas were commanded to "depart and go in peace."

Sometimes we find ourselves in troubling situations as the result of our service for the Lord. Doing that which we believe to be right and according to His will, we seem to end up in the "prison" of suffering, hardship, and loss, and are tempted to complain, "Lord, is this what I get for my faithfulness?" Then He comes and assures us that He "doeth all things well," and that Romans 8:28 is still in the Book! When all has been accomplished, we shall be able to look back and clearly see His hand and purpose in it all. "Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator" (1 Pet. 4:19).

There's One who will journey beside me,  
In weal, nor in woe, will forsake;  
And this is my solace and comfort,  
"He knoweth the way that I take!" —Anon.

Every lock of sorrow has a key of promise to fit it!

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**Our Daily Bread** - When Paul and Silas were imprisoned at Philippi and their backs were raw from beatings, they sang hymns (Acts 16:23-25). They chose the bright color of praise instead of the dark colors of depression, bitterness, and despair. No matter what affliction or crisis we may face, we too can decide how we will respond. With the enablement of the Holy Spirit, we can refuse to paint our lives in the dull gray of grumbling and complaining. Instead, our chosen color can be the azure blue of contentment because God's help is always available. -- Vernon C. Grounds



He gives me joy in place of sorrow;  
He gives me love that casts out fear;  
He gives me sunshine for my shadow,  
And "beauty for ashes" here. -- Crabbe

**God chooses what we go through;  
we choose how we go through it.**

**Acts 16:25 But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them;**

- **about midnight** : Job 35:10 Ps 22:2 42:8 77:6 119:55,62 Isa 30:29
- **praying** : Ps 50:15 77:2 91:15 Mt 26:38,39 Lu 22:44 Heb 5:7 Jas 5:13
- **singing**: Ac 5:41 Ps 34:1 Mt 5:10,11 Lu 6:22,23 Ro 5:3 12:12 2Co 4:8,9,16 2Co 4:17 6:10 Php 2:17 4:4-7 Col 1:24 3:15-17 1Th 5:16-18 Jas 1:2 1Pe 1:6-8 4:14
- **and the** : Ezra 3:12,13 Ps 71:7 Zec 3:8
- Sir William Ramsay - [Acts 16:25 \(St Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen\)](#)
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE MIDNIGHT SERENADE

In music, a **serenade** is a musical performance delivered in honor of someone, in this case in honor of the Most High God!

**John Stott**: It is wonderful that in such pain, with lacerated backs and aching limbs, Paul and Silas at about midnight were praying and singing hymns to God. Not groans but songs came from their mouths. Instead of cursing men, they blessed God. No wonder the other prisoners were listening to them.

As **Wiersbe** said "Prayer and praise are powerful weapons (2 Chron. 20:1-22; Acts 4:23-37). (Bible Exposition Commentary – Be Daring).

The Levites, from the sons of the Kohathites and of the sons of the Korahites, **stood up to praise the LORD God of Israel, with a very loud voice.** 20 They rose early in the morning and went out to the wilderness of Tekoa; and when they went out, Jehoshaphat stood and said, "Listen to me, O Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem, put your trust in the LORD your God and you will be established. Put your trust in His prophets and succeed." 21 When he had consulted with the people, he appointed those who sang to the LORD and those who **praised Him** in holy attire, as they went out before the army and said, "**Give thanks to the LORD, for His lovingkindness is everlasting.**" 22 **When they began singing and praising, the LORD set ambushes against the sons of Ammon, Moab and Mount Seir, who had come against Judah; so they were routed.** (2 Chr 20:19-22)

**About midnight (mesonuktion)** is two words which literally means middle of the night (Mark 13:35; Luke 11:5)

**Harry Ironside** wrote that "You may think it far-fetched, but I have an idea that if there were more joy in tribulation, more triumphing in trouble in our own day, we would see more shaking by the power of God. The unsaved people of the world are watching Christians, and when they see Christians shaken by circumstances, they conclude that after all there is very little to Christianity. But when they find Christians rising above circumstances and glorying in the Lord even in deepest trial, then the unsaved realize the Christian has a comfort to which they are strangers. **(ILLUSTRATION)** You may have heard the story of the Christian who one day met another believer whose face was long as a fiddle and asked, "How are you?" The man replied, "Well, I am pretty well under the circumstances." To which the other replied, "I'm sorry you are under the circumstances. Get above the circumstances! Don't allow yourself to be under them. Christians should never be under the circumstances." Paul and Silas were not. They were above them." ([Acts 16 Commentary](#))

**Spurgeon** - Another prayer-meeting, and a praise-meeting, too. There were only two persons at it; but they "prayed, and sang praises unto God."

**THOUGHT** - You do not have to be in church with the worship team singing and the drums beating out a catchy rhythm in order to have a praise and worship service! Try your car the next time you feel "imprisoned"

by the non-moving traffic! You always have a choice -- you could murmur or you could praise, and oh the difference of the effect between the two on the state of your heart and soul! At the very least, if you don't have the Christian music turned on, it is time to turn it on and do a little "holy karaoke" to Jesus! (Heb 13:15) Amen? Amen! And then just sit back and watch the Spirit set you free from the "prison" of frustration, etc, over the traffic jam, as He transforms your spiritual sight (2 Cor 5:7) from horizontally focused to vertically focused (of course keep your literal sight on the car in front of you)! In sum, praising God does not depend on circumstance, but it can certainly change our reaction to our circumstances! (See Php 4:4, 1 Th 5:18 both of which are commands in the [present imperative](#) [continuously rejoice and thank] indicating our need to continually rely on the Spirit to give us the power to praise and thank. This is why it is good to be sure you are filled with the Spirit before you get on the freeway! ).

**G Campbell Morgan** - The revelation of supreme value to us in the story is that first of the power of Christ to overcome the bitterness of difficult circumstances. It was not a song of deliverance that these men were singing, but the song of perfect content in bondage. That is the supreme marvel of the Christian consciousness and the Christian triumph. Any man can sing when the prison doors are open, and he is set free. The Christian soul sings in prison. ([Acts of the Apostles](#))

**F. Whitfield** - While your salvation depends on Jesus and His finished work, and on that alone, your enjoyment of that salvation depends very much on yourself—on your holy walk with God, on your living a life within the veil—living daily by faith on Him Who loved you and gave Himself for you. Without this you may be a Christian, but you will never be a peaceful, praising, happy Christian.

### **Lord teach me to praise instead of complain!**

Here are Paul and Silas beaten half to death with "many stripes" on their bare backs with wooden rods, and they had a prayer service! What's our excuse? These missionaries were relying on God's sufficiency. As Vance Havner said, "Our efficiency turns out to be a deficiency unless we have God's sufficiency."

**Praying and singing** - Beloved if I were unjustly treated like Paul and Silas, I am afraid that too often my first reaction would be to murmur or dispute the charges (see **notes** Php 2:14; 2:15). However instead of complaining to God or even calling on Him to avenge their unjust treatment (see **notes** Ro 12:17; 18;19; 20; 21; 1Th 5:15, 1 Pe 3:9) Paul and Silas prayed and praised God (see **notes** 1Th 5:16; 17; 18) And one other point that could be easily overlooked. The word Luke uses for praying ([proseuchomai](#)) has no suggestion of petition ("Let us loose Lord") but to the contrary indicates their attitudes of adoration and worship! This is truly supernatural grace on display, not asking petitions (which most of us would be doing) but praising God! O, how powerful is the energizing effect of the Spirit on a heart surrendered to Jesus as these men willingly accept His cross and deny self. They were in a dark, dismal, deadly, dreary dungeon and yet they flooded the cell with Gospel glories and exuberant joy! O, to be imitators of such men (cf Heb 6:12).

**THOUGHT** - Are you in some spiritual "night?" Trying singing and praying!

Notice also that the KJV gives a misconception ("prayed and sang") as if they did it once and no more. To the contrary the present tense and **praying** (and imperfect for singing) indicates this was their continual activity! Amazing grace indeed!

**Praying** (4336)([proseuchomai](#) from **pros** = toward, facing, before [emphasizing the direct approach of the one who prays in seeking God's face] + **euchomai** = originally to speak out, utter aloud, express a wish, then to pray or to vow. Greek technical term for invoking a deity) in the NT is always used of prayer addressed to God (to Him as the object of faith and the One who will answer one's prayer) and means to speak consciously (with or without vocalization) to Him, with a definite aim (See study of noun [proseuche](#)). **Proseuchomai** encompasses all the aspects of prayer -- submission, confession, petition, supplication (may concern one's own need), intercession (concerned with the needs of others), praise, and thanksgiving.

### [I sing praises to Your Name, oh Lord](#)

Praises to Your Name, oh Lord

For Your Name is great

And greatly to be praised

**Tertullian** - "The legs feel nothing in the stocks when the heart is in heaven" ([To the Martyrs 2](#); cf. Rom 5:3; Jas 1:2; 1 Pet 5:6).

**Brian Bell** - What a contrast in the gospels where king Herod frets while sitting on his throne; while here, prisoners rejoice because their minds are at ease! 2.25.1. Spurgeon, "A crust of bread from one heart brings a song, from another a thousand acres of ripening grain can produce no thanksgiving."

**Vincent** - Lit., praying, they sang hymns. The praying and the praise are not described as distinct acts. Their singing of hymns was their prayer, probably Psalms.

**Robertson** - Present middle participle (praying) and imperfect active indicative (singing): Praying they were singing (simultaneously, blending together petition and praise). Humneō (sing) is an old verb from humnos (cf. Isa. 12:4; Dan. 3:23). Paul and Silas probably used portions of the Psalms (cf. Luke 1:39, 67f.; 2:28f.) with occasional original outbursts of praise.

Paul and Silas were clearly Word saturated, Spirit filled (controlled) men, for their response is totally unnatural and wholly supernatural as the following passages in Colossians and Ephesians underscore.

**Paul** explains how we can have a song in our heart writing to the saints in **Colossae**...

Let the word of Christ richly dwell (continually) within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God** (see **note** Colossians 3:16)

And to the saints at **Ephesus** he wrote...

And do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be (continually) filled with the Spirit, 19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, **singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord**; 20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father (see **notes** Eph 5:18; 19; 20)

#### **Related Resource:**

- [Filled with His Spirit/Richly Indwelt with His Word](#) - See Chart Comparing the Word and the Spirit

The Spirit strengthened their inner man to respond not naturally but supernaturally. When you are in pain, the midnight hour is not the easiest time for worship and praise, but we must remember the truth of what God says about Himself...

God gives songs in the night, Elihu declaring...

But no one says, "Where is God my Maker, Who gives songs in the night" (Job 35:10)

The psalmist whose soul is like a deer panting for the water brooks (Ps 42:1 -[Spurgeon note](#)) testifies that...

The LORD will command His lovingkindness in the daytime and His song will be with me in the night, a prayer to the God of my life. (Ps 42:8 - [Spurgeon note](#)).

**George Müller** once said that "Trials are food for faith to feed on."

**Spurgeon** quipped "Any fool can sing in the day. It is easy to sing when we can read the notes by daylight; but the skillful singer is he who can sing when there is not a ray of light to read by... Songs in the night come only from God; they are not in the power of men." (Amen!)

**G Campbell Morgan** adds that "Any man can sing when the prison doors are open, and he is set free. The Christian soul sings in prison. I think that Paul would probably have sung a solo had I been Silas: but I nevertheless see the glory and grandeur of the Spirit that rises superior to all the things of difficulty and limitation.

Dear downcast believer, please remember that the Word of God teaches that prayer and praise are powerful weapons (Read and be encouraged by the illustration of this principle in 2 Chr 20:1-22)

**THOUGHT** - One of the most important times to sing praise to God is when we feel imprisoned by the circumstances of life. Of course that is the time when we least likely "feel" like it! That's when we need to lean hard into the everlasting arms of our God, asking His Holy Spirit to place a song in our heart. Then like the experience of Paul and Silas in the Roman prison, it is often uncanny how prayer and praise open the doors of our lives to new dimensions of opportunity and spiritual power, including the power to persevere under whatever "prison" we find ourselves in!

**Singing** ([5214](#))(**humneo** from **húmnos** = hymn; English = hymn) means to celebrate or praise with a hymn, to sing a song of praise.

**Gilbrant** - In classical Greek humneō first refers to singing a song or hymn. By extension it means to extol, praise, or affirm solemnly the nature of another. The general use of humneō in classical Greek is to sing a hymn of praise to the gods (Delling, "humnos," Kittel, 8:490). Humneō is found in the Septuagint with abundant occurrences in the third chapter of Daniel (36 times). The basic meaning is similar to that of its classical Greek use "sing the praise of" or "magnifying through songs or hymns of praise." Humneō in the vocabulary of the New Testament refers both to the singing of hymns of praise as well as praise to God which is not necessarily to be sung. (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

**Humnos** (hymnos) is a song or hymn in honor of God. The word humnos also came to mean praise to men. Whereas a psalm is the story of man's deliverance or a commemoration of mercies received, a hymn is a magnificent, a declaration of how great someone or something is (Lu 1:46-55, 67-79; Acts 4:24; 16:25). A hymn is a direct address of praise and glory to God. According to Augustine a **hymn** has three characteristics: It must be sung; it must be praise; it must be to God. The word **hymn** nowhere occurs in the writings of the apostolic fathers because it was used as a praise to heathen deities and thus the early Christians instinctively shrank from it.

Here are the 3 other NT uses of humneo and all have Jesus singing a hymn. Won't that be incredible day when we hear Him sing a hymn?

Matthew 26:30 After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Mark 14:26 After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Hebrews 2:12 saying, "I WILL PROCLAIM YOUR NAME TO MY BRETHREN, IN THE MIDST OF THE CONGREGATION I WILL SING YOUR PRAISE." (quoting Ps 22:22 which uses humneo)

**Humneo** in the Septuagint -

Jdg. 16:24; 1 Chr. 16:9; 2 Chr. 23:13; 2 Chr. 29:30; Neh. 12:24; Est. 4:17; Ps. 22:22; Ps. 65:13; Ps. 71:8; Prov. 1:20; Prov. 8:3; Isa. 12:4; Isa. 12:5; Isa. 25:1; Isa. 42:10; Dan. 3:24;

1 Chronicles 16:9 Sing to Him, sing praises to Him; Speak of all His wonders.

2 Chronicles 29:30 Moreover, King Hezekiah and the officials ordered the Levites to sing praises to the LORD with the words of David and Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with joy, and bowed down and worshiped.

Isaiah 12:4+ And in that day you will say, "Give thanks to the LORD, call on His name. Make known His deeds among the peoples; Make them remember that His name is exalted. 5 Praise the LORD in song, for He has done excellent things; Let this be known throughout the earth.

The prisoners and the guards undoubtedly heard much about Christ and His saving gospel through the hymns of Paul and Silas, as well as through their testimony of rejoicing in the midst of suffering.

**THOUGHT** - This is another reason, we need to be very careful and very intentional in choosing the words we sing. I will never forget the story by Ira Sankey (D L Moody's worship leader) who wrote "I have a record, said a Wesleyan missionary laboring in the West Indies, of **two hundred persons, young and old, who received the most direct evidence of the forgiveness of their sins while singing [Arise, my soul](#)** (written by Charles Wesley). The conversion of the greater number of these persons took place while I was a missionary abroad."

**UPSHOT** - If your church does not sing some of the doctrinally rich hymns of old, than you are missing a golden opportunity to edify and encourage the saints and even see some conversions! Catchy Christian songs with cute lyrics don't hold a candle to hymns like "And Can It Be," etc.

**John Stott** quips that "Instead of cursing men, they blessed God."

During Paul's second missionary journey, the apostle and his compatriot, Silas, found their ministry causing a riot, and they felt the brunt of it. Their clothes were torn from them, and they were beaten and thrown into prison. Stress? Yes! Anxiety? Every legitimate reason for it! How did Paul and Silas handle it? What kept them from breaking? Acts 16:25 gives us the answer, "But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God." They turned their focus from the present pressures of their lives to the throne of their sovereign Abba Father -- and the tension was relieved.

When sheep become tense, edgy, and restless, the shepherd will quietly move through the flock, and his very presence will release the tension of the sheep and quiet their anxieties. Their shepherd is there! And this is what happens when we begin to worship our God and our Lord in song. We move into a consciousness of His presence, and the tension begins to unravel, the tautness of the pressure eases, anxieties become meaningless, for we are reminded that He is there -- our Jehovah Shamah, our all-sufficient sovereign God. He inhabits the praises of His people.

**Songs** that stir your soul to worship...songs that bring tears of gratitude to your eyes...spiritual songs and making melody in your heart is God's way of delivering you from the stresses of the world.

**John MacArthur** - Christians rejoice in the glorious truth that the sovereign God controls every circumstance of life. They "know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Ro 8:28±). When trials come, believers can take comfort in the truth expressed by Peter in 1 Peter 5:10±: "After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and

establish you." (see 2 Corinthians 4:16-17+)...Paul and Silas did not base their theology on their circumstances. Instead, they evaluated those circumstances in light of what they knew to be true about God. Their songs expressed confident trust that God would use their circumstances for their good and His glory. They did not have long to wait until He did."

**And the prisoners were listening to them** - **Listening** is the verb **epakroanomai** used only here and is in the [imperfect tense](#) -- over and over they were listening much like Lydia was listening (different verb) to Paul in Acts 16:14-[note](#). **Robertson** adds that **epakroanomai** is "Rare verb to listen with pleasure as to a recitation or music (Page). It was a new experience for the prisoners and wondrously attractive entertainment to them."

### **Make me an Intercessor**

Make me an intercessor, one who can really pray,  
one of the Lord's remembrances by night as well as day.

Make me an intercessor, in Spirit-touch with Thee,  
and give the heavenly vision praying through to victory.

Make me an intercessor, teach me how to prevail,  
to stand my ground and still pray on, though pow'rs of hell assail.

Make me an intercessor, sharing Thy death and life,  
in praying claiming for others, victory in the strife.

Make me an intercessor, willing for deeper death,  
emptied, broken, then made anew, and filled with Living Breath.

Make me an intercessor, hidden-unknown—set apart,  
thought little of by those around, but satisfying Thine heart.

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**Illustration:** Before he became D.L Moody's famous song leader, Ira Sankey was assigned to night duty in the American Civil War.

While on duty one night, he lifted his eyes toward heaven and began to sing, praising the Lord while he was alone. At least, he thought he was alone.

Years later, after the war had ended, Sankey was on a ship traveling across the Atlantic Ocean. Since he was now a famous singer a crowd of people approached him and asked him to sing.

He lifted up his eyes toward heaven and sang a beautiful hymn.

After his song, a man from the crowd asked him if, on a certain night during the Civil War, he had performed night duty for a certain infantry unit.

Sankey said, "Yes, I did."

The man continued, "I was on the opposite side of the war, and I was hiding in a bush near your camp. With my rifle aimed at your head, I was about to shoot you when you looked toward heaven and began to sing.

I thought, 'Well, I like music, and this guy has a nice voice. I'll sit here, let him sing the song... and then shoot him. He's not going anywhere.' But then I realized what you were singing. It was the same hymn my mother used to sing at my bedside when I was a child. And it's the same hymn you sang tonight! I tried, but that night during the Civil War, I was powerless to shoot you!"

Ira Sankey pointed that man to Christ. He and thousands of others were saved under Sankey's ministry. All this stemmed from the fact that Sankey praised the Lord at all times.

A lost world is watching what we do and listening to what we say.

Paul and Silas had the ears of these prisoners.

What kind of testimony do we have in the world?

The Jack Andrews Expository Studies

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**Jack Arnold** - What was the mental attitude of Paul and Silas? Did they say, "O Lord, why did you let this happen to us? Why are you allowing us to be treated so badly when we are your children?" No, they were praying and singing so loud that prisoners all over

the jail could hear their voices. They turned the whole situation into a praise and prayer service. What a positive mental attitude for Christ in the midst of the worst kind of circumstances. Why could they do this? They knew God was in control of all the circumstances and could deliver them when He was ready. They were applying biblical truth to their situation.

“And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpos” (Rom. 8:28).

“In everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (I Thess. 5:18).

Their confidence was in a sovereign God. My friends, this may have been the greatest hymn sing of all time. What were they singing? We are not told but most believe they were singing psalms. Perhaps they were singing Psalm 100:

“Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth.

Serve the LORD with gladness;

Come before Him with joyful singing.

Know that the LORD Himself is God;

It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;

We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

Enter His gate with thanksgiving,

And His courts with praise.

Give thanks to Him; bless His name.

For the LORD is good;

His lovingkindness is everlasting,

And His faithfulness to all generations.”

Perhaps they were chanting and harmonizing such Scripture verses as Isaiah 45:22 which says, “Turn to Me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God,. and there is no other.” Whatever they were singing caused the other prisoners to listen intently. The prisoners must have been stunned, for in most jails there is cursing, grumbling and bitter spirits, but these men were praising God. They knew these two prisoners were different and had something that gave them victory in the midst of trials.

The unsaved world, for the most part, is not interested in our Christian doctrine, but they are looking to see whether the God Christians claim to follow stabilizes them in the midst of intense pressure. If they can see this, then they may be interested in knowing the Christ Christians claim to follow.

Andrew Murray said there are four anchors to remember in suffering. They are:

- (1) I am here by God’s appointment for He brought me here;
- (2) I am here in His keeping, for God will grant me grace and love to live as His child;
- (3) I am here under His training, for He has many lessons He intends for me to learn; and
- (4) I am here for His time, for He will bring me out of the suffering when He is ready. [Sermon](#))

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### **Divine Appointments By Dave Branon**

Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. —Acts 16:25

Have you ever been stuck in an airport? For 24 hours? In a city where you can’t speak the language? Four thousand miles from home?

It happened to a friend recently, and we can learn from his response. While most of us would find such an inconvenience intolerable, my friend John saw God’s hand in his delay. As he waited out his forced stay, he looked for opportunities to connect with fellow passengers. He “happened” to find some fellow Christians from India—and in talking to them he heard about a ministry they were involved with. In fact, because John’s interests matched his new friends’ ministry, they invited him to India to participate in a short-term project.

How often do we experience delays, changes of plans, and redirections and treat them as intrusions? It could be that God is detouring us so we can do something different or new for Him. Consider Paul’s trip to Philippi in Acts 16. He had gone to Macedonia because of a God-directed vision (vv.9-10). How could he know that he would end up in prison there? But even that trip to jail was God-led, because He used Paul to bring salvation to a jailer and his family (vv.25-34).

God can use inconveniences in our lives if we look at them as divine appointments.

"Disappointment—His appointment,"  
Change one letter, then I see  
That the thwarting of my purpose  
Is God's better choice for me. —Young  
God can turn obstacles into opportunities.

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### **Christ—The Praise of My Life - Robert Neighbour**

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

There can be no scene more soul-stirring than the scene presented in the Book of Revelation, chapters 4 and 5. In this scene Jesus Christ is seated upon a throne and before Him lies a sea of glass, around Him are gathered, first, the four living ones and then the four and twenty elders, and then a great multitude of the Heavenly hosts; then, if you will include chapter 7, a multitude which no man can number who have come up out of the Great Tribulation. These all rend the heavens with praises to Christ, the worthy Lamb.

The time is coming when the heavens will rend with the mighty shout of praise that shall ascend from these angelic and redeemed hosts. The glory of that day will eclipse by far the day of old, when God created the worlds and the stars shouted for joy.

If such a day of praise awaits our Lord, surely those of us who love the Lord and who have been redeemed, should not await that blessed day to shout the praises of our God.

The praises of our God should be continually upon our lips. O that men would praise the Lord for all of His wonderful works! How can we but praise Him?

No wonder that Paul and Silas sang at the midnight hour. What cared they if their feet were in the stocks and their bruised backs pressed the hard earth. They could not restrain their overwhelming joy; the very prison walls were shaken with their shouts.

It was when the Temple was being dedicated, and the trumpeters and the singers were all filled with joy, and praise, that the glory of the Lord filled the House.

When Christ becomes the praise of our lives, then His glory will rest upon us.

"Crown the Saviour! angels, crown Him!

Rich the trophies Jesus brings:  
In the seat of power enthrone Him,  
While the vault of Heaven rings.

"Hark the bursts of acclamation!

Hark those loud triumphant chords!  
Jesus takes the highest station:  
Oh, what joy the sight affords!"

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### **Acts 16:25 Powerful Influence**

**By Herbert Vander Lugt**

2 Timothy 1:1-7

At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. —Acts 16:25

I'm sure that I am a Christian today because of the formative influence of my parents in my childhood. They taught me by example and from the Bible. Just as Timothy was reminded by Paul of the faith of his mother and grandmother (2 Timothy 1:5), so too I recall the faith of my mother and father. At an early age, I committed my life to Christ. I realized I was a sinner and needed His forgiveness.

Strong influences may also come from people outside the family. I know a young man who became a devout believer as a young boy because he saw Christ in the life of his Sunday school teacher.

In Acts 16 we read that Paul and Silas sang and prayed in a Philippian jail at midnight. When an earthquake broke open the prison doors, the jailer was so terrified that he was about to commit suicide, but Paul stopped him. Seeing that the prisoners did not try to escape, the jailer fell down trembling. "What must I do to be saved?" he asked (v.30). That day he and his entire household became believers. Why? Because of the powerful influence of two men who were faithful to Christ.

The way we live does affect others for good or for bad. This is a sobering and challenging truth that should influence the way we as Christians walk and talk. —HVL

Only one life, so live it well,

And keep your candle trimmed and bright;  
Eternity, not time, will tell  
The radius of that candle's light. —Miller

Your life either sheds light or casts a shadow.

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### **Choose to Rejoice**

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.—Acts 16:25

Your joy as a Christian should not depend on your circumstances. Joy comes from God, and therefore it cannot be affected by what is outside of you. Don't be fooled into letting the actions of others determine your joy. True joy comes from knowing that God Himself lives within you and has fellowship with you, regardless of your environment. Real joy lies in the knowledge that holy God has completely forgiven you of every sin, and even now, He has a home prepared in heaven where you can spend eternity with Him (John 14:3). The circumstances of your life cannot change these truths! Paul and Silas faced some of the most difficult circumstances imaginable. They were falsely accused, arrested, and imprisoned. They were beaten and shackled in the darkest, coldest section of the prison. But they refused to allow their horrific situation to dampen their joy! They did not blame God for allowing these things to happen to them. Instead, they praised Him for His goodness! In the darkness of the night, they prayed and they sang. God brought a miracle that released them from their chains, but perhaps the greater miracle was that His Holy Spirit could so fill them that even in their painful imprisonment they could overflow with joy!

Do not allow difficult events to cancel the joy of knowing you are a child of God.

Choose to allow God's Spirit to fill you with His unquenchable joy, and your life will be a miracle to those who watch you face the trials that come.

**John MacArthur** wrote, "The key to having joy in every circumstance of life is to be filled with the Spirit. Joy is part of the fruit of the Spirit, and yielding to His control produces songs of joy. The problem with sad, miserable Christians is not their circumstances but the lack of living a Spirit-controlled life."

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### **Acts 16:25-34 Open Doors**

By Dennis Fisher

1 Corinthians 16:1-12

For a great and effective door has opened to me. —1 Corinthians 16:9

The Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855) wrote: "If I were to wish for anything, I should not wish for wealth and power, but . . . for the eye which, ever young and ardent, sees the possible."

The apostle Paul saw some great ministry possibilities in his life situations. He used the open doors God provided to witness for Christ. When he was arrested in Jerusalem and appeared before Governor Felix, he used the opportunity to proclaim the gospel (Acts 24:24). While he and Silas were in prison, they shared the gospel with the Philippian jailer (Acts 16:25-34). And later Paul used his imprisonment in Rome as an opportunity to encourage the Philippian believers in their faith (Phil. 1:12-18).

In writing to the church at Corinth, Paul told the believers he wanted to visit and spend some time with them, but that he needed to stay in Ephesus because of an opportunity for ministry: "I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great and effective door has opened to me" (1 Cor. 16:8-9). And Paul also involved others by asking them to pray for open doors so he could speak clearly about Christ (Col. 4:3).

Ask God to show you possible open doors of service. You might be surprised at what you see.

Jesus said to one and all:

"Take your cross and follow Me."

When you sense the Spirit's call,

Seize the opportunity! —Hess

God writes opportunity on one side of the door and responsibility on the other.

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### **Acts 16:25-34 A 'Him' Sing**

By Mart De Haan

At midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God. —Acts 16:25

How could Paul and Silas sing in their terrible circumstances? They were in a strange city far away from home. They were risking their lives to proclaim Christ to people who resented them and bitterly opposed their message. Men with selfish motives had spread lies about their work and had demanded their arrest. The town officials ordered that they be beaten and thrown into prison.

It was under these conditions that Paul and Silas were singing. How can we account for this? The answer is clear. They could sing in the dark because they were doing what God wanted them to do.



The midnight songs of those two men remind me of the nightingale. Observers of this remarkable bird have wondered why it continues to sing after sundown. While other birds are quiet, the lilting melodies of this creature can still be heard. The dark does not silence its song. The nightingale sings at night because that's what God designed it to do.

When we walk with the Lord, we can have a song even in the midst of trouble. We won't be discouraged by circumstances. Our joy will be in doing what the Savior wants us to do. Our greatest delight will be knowing God and singing of Him, even in the dark.

There's within my heart a melody  
Jesus whispers sweet and low,  
"Fear not, I am with thee—peace, be still,"  
In all of life's ebb and flow. —Bridgers

There's a song in the night for those who walk in the Light.

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### **Acts 16:25-34 Feeling Or Faith?**

By Henry G. Bosch

He who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. —1 John 5:10

Many people seem to think that it's wrong to say we know we are bound for heaven. But the Bible tells us we can be sure.

Jesus said, "He who believes in Me has everlasting life" (Jn. 6:47). To question, therefore, whether one has been redeemed after he has fulfilled God's requirement for salvation is to call God a liar! This is a terrible sin. How much better to trust God's Word, which says, "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God" (1 Jn. 5:1).

A believer was once asked, "Do you feel that your sins are forgiven?" "No," was the reply, "I do not always feel that they are forgiven, but I know they are, because God says so in His Word!"

Paul did not say, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will feel that you are saved." He said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). Not all people feel that their sins are forgiven the moment they put their faith in Jesus Christ and receive the gift of salvation, but they are saved nonetheless. The feeling may come later.

Even the faintest cry to God for salvation is heard and answered. Rest on the rock-solid foundation of the Word, not on the sinking sand of your feeling!

Salvation is not feeling, but faith.

**Acts 16:26 and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened.**

- suddenly : Ac 4:31 5:19 12:7,10 Mt 28:2 Rev 6:12 11:13
- and every : Ps 79:11 102:20 146:7 Isa 42:7 61:1 Zec 9:11,12
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### **SUDDENLY THE DIVINE HYMN TURNED INTO "A WHOLE LOTTA SHAKIN' GOING ON!"**

Elvis Presley had a hit song in 1957, but 1900 years earlier there had been a literal "Jailhouse Rock!" And it had a far greater impact on eternity than the Elvis version!

**Suddenly there came a great earthquake** - This was no seismological quirk but a genuine miracle, for earthquakes don't cause fetters to drop off of hands and feet! Further there is no evidence that the building itself was demolished. So a most unusual earthquake!

**Brian Bell** - There was some heaven-quake involved in this earthquake, lest how do you explain no one hurt. ([Sermon](#))

**Jack Arnold** - Why the earthquake? First, to confirm to Paul and Silas that God was with them. When we pray, God does earth-shaking things. Second, to cause the prisoners to know that the True God answers prayer. Third, to shake up the Philippian jailer so as to make him face a Christless eternity so as to drive him to Jesus Christ. What a contrast as to the various ways God chooses to save people. With Lydia, the Lord quietly opened her heart and she responded to Christ. With the demon possessed girl, He cast

out a demon, a rather exciting conversion. With the jailer, God brought an earthquake, which was a dynamic experience. Each person was equally saved, but none of the three had exactly the same circumstances. It took an earthquake to start the jailer to thinking about his soul. What will it take, my non-Christian friend, to start you thinking about eternity? Will it take a death of a loved one, or a sickness, or a financial setback, or the breakup of a marriage? ([sermon](#))

As discussed below the last time Luke used "**suddenly**" was when the Spirit of God came on Pentecost, loosing tongues to speak praises to God (Acts 2:11+)

**Suddenly** (869) ([aphno](#)) is an adjective/adverb which means suddenly, all of a sudden, immediately (at once). **BDAG** says [aphno](#) relates "to a very brief interval between a state or event that precedes and one that follows." [Aphno](#) is used 3x in the NT and 6x in the Septuagint. It describes Joshua coming on the enemy suddenly (Josh 10:9), of dread coming on one like a storm (suddenly) (Pr 1:27), of man's appointed time (his death) which will suddenly fall on them (Eccl 9:12), of the sudden disaster that would fall on Jerusalem (Jer 18:22), of the sudden fall of Babylon (Jer 51:8, cp Da 5:26, 27, 28, 31<sup>±</sup>). Here are the 3 NT uses describing 3 sudden events - Spirit's coming at Pentecost, a great earthquake liberating Paul and Silas from prison (note it came after their praise and worship service!), and the sudden demise of Paul which was expected after he was bitten by a viper.

Acts 2:2+ And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

Acts 28:6 But they were expecting that he was about to swell up or **suddenly** fall down dead. But after they had waited a long time and had seen nothing unusual happen to him, they changed their minds and began to say that he was a god.

**Earthquake** (4578) ([seismos](#) from [seio](#) = to shake) means an agitation or shaking as a series of violent movements, usually of the earth, but once of a storm or tempest at sea (Mt 8:24).

#### Related Resources:

- [Up to date information on latest earthquakes](#) - As I wrote this note 4/6/18 at 4:23 AM read report of 5.9 quake off coast of El Salvador (Apr 2, 6:23 PM)!
- [Earthquake map](#) - latest worldwide (hold pointer over map and rotate mouse scroll wheel)
- [Earthquakes, great - Wikipedia](#)

**Robertson** - Luke regarded it as an answer to prayer as in Acts 4:31....If the prison was excavated from rocks in the hillside, as was often the case, the earthquake would easily have slipped the bars of the doors loose and the chains would have fallen out of the walls.

**Spurgeon** - This was no common earthquake. An ordinary earthquake might have brought the prison down about their ears; but it would not have loosed the bands of the prisoners.

**So that** ([term of purpose or result](#)) **the foundations of the prison house were shaken** - I would call this "selective shaking" orchestrated by the omnipotent, omniscient God Who shook the prison enough to get everyone's attention, open jail cells and unshackle manacles, but not too much so that walls came tumbling down crushing everyone!

**Foundations** (2310) ([themelios](#) from [théma](#) = that which is laid down in turn from [títhemi](#) = to place [see study of related word [themelios](#)]) means something laid or put down, that on which a structure is built or a stone used in the construction of a foundation. It was used literally of buildings foundation (foundation stone Rev 21:14).

**Were shaken** (4531) ([saleuo](#) from [salos](#) = wave) means to cause to move to and fro, cause to waver or totter, make to rock. In Acts 4:31+ the prayer meeting was literally shaken by the power of God! Here the prison was shaken by the power of God, again associated with prayer (and praise)!

**THOUGHT** - While God is unlikely to shaken the room or send an earthquake when we pray (notice both Acts 4:31+ and here in Acts 16:26 there were **2 or more gathered together** which is intriguing considering how prayer gatherings have fallen on hard times in most evangelical churches), He is still just a likely to "shake things up," in one way or another in answer to the prayers of His children. This begs the question - Do we (I) really believe that God is still in the "shaking business?" O that the Spirit would sweep like a mighty rushing wind through evangelical churches all across America and birth a spirit of prayer such that saints are constrained, compelled, impelled (supernaturally) to gather together to pray for revival of His great Name and His glory in Christ! Let it be so Lord God. Amen.

**Illustration** - One Easter morning a Pastor in Chicago was preaching and he dramatically called out, "And the last enemy to be

conquered is death!" Just at that time a huge slab of ice came loose and fell from the steeple and crashed into the roof of the church, shaking the whole building. The pastor said, "Thank You, Lord, for the sound effects!" This was not sound effects in the Philippian jail! The very foundations were really shaken by a God sent earthquake! (Jack Andrews Expository Studies – Understanding Acts)

## UNSHACKLED

There was a famous radio program that was called [Unshackled](#), to depict what happened to people in extreme situations (drugs, etc) when Christ set them free delivering them from bondage to Satan and sin and this godless world.

**Paul Apple** - What a demonstration of the Power of God – He specializes in delivering people from all types of chains of bondage – - Think of the chains of death that could not hold His Son captive – Jesus triumphed over death so that all who trust in Him could live forever - The chains of this jail in Philippi that had been secured by Satan were no challenge to the power of God

**And immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened** - So not just the doors of the cell that held Paul and Silas but ALL the doors. One has to wonder how many of the inmates we will see in heaven! Talk about a Gospel proclamation!

The irony is that Paul and Silas were set free (physically) so that another man might set free (spiritually)!

**Opened** (455) ([anoigo](#) from **ana** = again + **oigo** = to open) means to open, to open up, to give access to. Used literally here as in Acts 5:19 in an earlier "prison break." Used figuratively to describe salvation in Acts 26:18+ "to **open** their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan to God..." The derivative verb [dianoigo](#) is used to describe the Spirit opening Lydia's heart in Acts 16:14.

All Luke's uses of **anoigo** in Acts -

Acts 5:19; Acts 5:23; Acts 8:32; Acts 8:35; Acts 9:8; Acts 9:40; Acts 10:11; Acts 10:34; Acts 12:10; Acts 12:14; Acts 12:16; Acts 14:27; Acts 16:26; Acts 16:27; Acts 18:14; Acts 26:18

**Immediately** (at once) (3916) ([parachrema](#) from **pará** = at, and **chréma** = something useful or needed) means suddenly, immediately, at the very moment, on the spot, forthwith, directly after something else has taken place. It sometimes has the implication of unexpectedness.

Uses of **parachrema** - most by Luke -

Matt. 21:19; Matt. 21:20; Lk. 1:64; Lk. 4:39; Lk. 8:44; Lk. 8:47; Lk. 8:55; Lk. 13:13; Lk. 18:43; Lk. 19:11; Lk. 22:60; Acts 3:7; Acts 5:10; Acts 12:23; Acts 13:11; Acts 16:26; Acts 16:33

**Matthew** records a similar even more magnificent opening caused by an earthquake - And behold, a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat upon it. 3 And his appearance was like lightning, and his garment as white as snow; 4 and the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. 5 And the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid; for I know that you are looking for Jesus who has been crucified. 6 "He is not here, for He has risen, just as He said. Come, see the place where He was lying. 7 "And go quickly and tell His disciples that He has risen from the dead; and behold, He is going before you into Galilee, there you will see Him; behold, I have told you." (Mt 28:2-7)

**John** records another notable earthquake (yet future) which marks the midpoint of Daniel's Seventieth Week of Seven Years and the inception of the horrible time for earth called the Great Tribulation...

And in that hour there was a great earthquake, and a tenth of the city fell; and seven thousand people were killed in the earthquake, and the rest were terrified and gave glory to the God of heaven. 14 The second woe is past; behold, the third woe is coming quickly. 15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there arose loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He will reign forever and ever." (see **notes** [Revelation 11:13](#); [11:14](#); [11:15](#))

**Everyone's chains were unfastened** - compare to similar supernatural releases from jail in Acts...

But an angel of the Lord during the night opened the gates of the prison, and taking them (Peter and the other apostles) out... (Acts 5:19+)

And behold, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared, and a light shone in the cell; and he struck Peter's side and roused him, saying, "Get up quickly." And **his chains fell off his hands**. (Acts 12:7+)

**Comment** - While he used an angel in Acts 12, God used an earthquake in Acts 16, but in effect they are both "supernatural" (even though the earthquake was "natural.")

**Chains** (1199) (**desmos**) literally refers to a bond or fetter and by metonymy signifies imprisonment or prison. Figuratively **desmos** refers to an impediment which causes a physical disability ("the **impediment** of his tongue" Mk 7:35) or a crippled condition (Lk 13:16). **Desmos** is usually plural in the NT, only twice

**Gilbrant** - Classical Greek from Homer (ca. 800-700 B.C.) to Roman times treats **desmos** as "bond" or "fetter." In the singular form it generally describes an impediment or infirmity which afflicts a person. The more common plural form **desma** usually applies to a person's captivity or bondage, as in a prison or to a binding power. The primary usage in the New Testament is the plural form **desma**, and in each instance it suggests incarceration or confinement as a prisoner. The frequency of **desma** in the Pauline letters (eight times) shows the apostle's "imprisonment for the gospel" (Philippians 1:13; Philemon 13) which affected his self-understanding in relation to Christ. Paul reckoned himself a prisoner of the Lord (2 Timothy 1:8) as well as "a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher" (2 Timothy 1:11). His entire future was offered up to the Lord in sacrifice like a prisoner of love. (Complete Biblical Library Greek-English Dictionary)

**Desmos** 18x in 18v - bond(1), bonds(3), chains(3), impediment(1), imprisonment(10).

Mk. 7:35; Lk. 8:29; Lk. 13:16; Acts 16:26; Acts 20:23; Acts 23:29; Acts 26:29; Acts 26:31; Phil. 1:7; Phil. 1:13; Phil. 1:14; Phil. 1:17; Col. 4:18; 2 Tim. 2:9; Philemon 1:10; 1:13; Heb. 11:36; Jude 1:6

**Desmos** in Septuagint -

Gen. 42:27; Gen. 42:35; Lev. 26:13; Num. 19:15; Num. 30:13; Jdg. 15:13; Jdg. 15:14; Jdg. 16:11; 1 Sam. 25:29; 2 Chr. 33:11; Ezr. 7:26; Job 38:31; Job 39:5; Ps. 2:3; Ps. 107:14; Ps 116:16 = "You have loosed my bonds"; Prov. 7:22; Eccl. 7:26; Isa. 28:22; Isa. 42:7; Isa. 49:9; Isa. 52:2; Jer. 2:20; Jer. 5:5; Jer. 27:2; Jer. 30:8; Ezek. 3:25; Ezek. 4:8; Dan. 4:15; Dan. 4:23; Hos. 11:4; Nah. 1:13; Hab. 3:13; Hag. 1:6; Mal. 4:2;

**Unfastened** (loosened) (447)(**aniemi** from **ana** = back + **hiemi** = send) means to send back, to relax with the basic idea of "relaxation of tension." To release, loosen or slacken (chains or ropes - Acts 27:40 = And casting off the anchors, they left them in the sea while at the same time they were **loosening** the ropes of the rudders, and hoisting the foresail to the wind, they were heading for the beach). It means to abandon a person (Heb 13:5-[note](#)) or to cease from, let alone, forbear an activity (Eph 6:9).

**The IVP New Testament Commentary** - The Lord "made his praise glorious" when *suddenly* (compare Acts 2:2) "the rocks cried out" as *the foundations of the prison were shaken* by a powerful earthquake, a phenomenon common in that region. The prison doors *flew open* (Acts 12:10) and the chains *came loose*, literally "came unfastened."

**Paul Apple** - If you are a believer in Jesus Christ and still living in bondage to sin, you need to open your eyes and see that the chains have fallen off. God delights to use simple object lessons and we have one of those clear pictures in our passage today. This passage is about the divine deliverance of Paul and Silas from the chains of prison in Philippi. But it is also about much more than that. For you see that the cry of the Philippian jailor is "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" The issues run much deeper. As you recall your own salvation, what type of chains fell off your life? Maybe there were chains of anger or fear. Certainly there were chains of selfishness and pride that prevented you from relating to God and to others around you in the type of love Christ came to demonstrate to us. But even though we have been delivered once for all in a positional sense from sin and from Satan and from the value system of the world around us we still struggle with fully experiencing that deliverance. This passage reminds us of the power of God and should encourage us to go out from the prison of sin rejoicing in the sufficiency of our salvation. That should be the testimony of all who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ alone for salvation. Maybe you are struggling with some particular sin and are having difficulty sensing any deliverance or victory. Hopefully this passage will encourage you to rejoice in the simplicity and completeness of your deliverance. Maybe you still wrestle with the issue of salvation itself and cry out with the Philippian jailor for God to open up your spiritual eyes to understand what it means to place your confidence in Jesus Christ alone.

**Acts 16:27 When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.**

- **the jailer:** Acts 16:23,24
- **he drew :** Judges 9:54 1 Sa 31:4,5 2Sa 17:23 1 Ki 16:18 Mt 27:5
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## DEATH'S DOOR

**When the jailer awoke** - Not sure he had heard God's men praying and singing (but subsequent question indicates he knew something about the gospel mission of these two men) but God's shaking of the earth would arouse anyone!

**Doors open** - Perfect tense pictures them as standing open, still open.

**The jailer was about to kill himself** - Instant death would be better to him than the torture that the authorities would inflict before they killed him. "He was on the point of committing suicide as Brutus had done near here. Stoicism had made suicide popular as the escape from trouble like the Japanese [harikari](#)." (Robertson)

Roman law stated that if a guard lost a prisoner, he was given the same punishment the prisoner would have received. It follows that the jailer knew that there were some men in the prison who had committed capital crimes and were being held for execution. The jailer would rather commit suicide than face shame and execution.

**NET Note** adds - The jailer's penalty for failing to guard the prisoners would have been death, so he contemplated saving the leaders the trouble (see Acts 12:19; 27:42).

**Spurgeon** - For the law was that, if a jailer lost a prisoner, he was to suffer whatever penalty the prisoner would have suffered. He therefore knew that, in all probability, his own life would be taken; and, strange to say, to save his life he would kill himself. Suicide is ever absurd and unreasonable. The worst that could happen to him would be to die by the sword of justice; and to escape from that, he tries to die by the sword of a suicide.

**Luke** records a similar fate to the guards who had **"allowed"** Peter to go free from jail...

And when Herod had searched for him and had not found him, he examined the guards and ordered that they be led away to execution (these words are added by the translators but the context justifies this interpretation).

And he went down from Judea to Caesarea and was spending time there. (Acts 12:19)

**Escaped** (1628) ([ekpheugo](#) from **ek** = out of, from + [pheugo](#) = move quickly from a point; flee; run) means to flee out of a place, flee from, run away or escape. The idea is to seek safety in flight or to become free from danger by avoiding some peril.

**Robertson** - Probably the prisoners were so panic stricken by the earthquake that they did not rally to the possibility of escape before the jailer awoke. He was responsible for the prisoners with his life (12:19; 27:42).

**John G. Butler** said, "Today we can have earthquakes, floods, hurricanes, diseases such as AIDS, and other catastrophes and yet most people laugh at the idea that God is judging and trying to say something to us. But it is a calloused heart that will not do some serious soul searching when calamities come."

### Related Resources

- [A Kingdom That Cannot Be Shaken](#)- John Piper
- [Whence and Why the Earthquake in Turkey?](#) - John Piper
- [Japan: After Empathy and Aid, People Want Answers](#)- John Piper

**Acts 16:28** But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!"

- cried : Lev 19:18 Ps 7:4 35:14 Pr 24:11,12 Mt 5:44 Lu 6:27,28 10:32-37 Lu 22:51 23:34 1Th 5:15
- Do : Ex 20:13 Pr 8:36 Ec 7:17
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## JAILER EXPERIENCES THE GRACE OF GOD

**But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!"** "A hard-hearted person seeking vengeance would have let the cruel jailer kill himself, but Paul was not that kind of a man." (Wiersbe)

**Loud voice** - megalē phōnē ("megaphone!")

**Do yourself no harm** - How paradoxical that it was the jailer who was the prisoner (spiritually speaking in bondage to sin, self and Satan), not Paul and so Paul not only saved the man's physical life (preventing him from committing suicide), but best of all pointed

him to the freedom of an eternal life in Christ.

**Guzik** - In not escaping, they showed tremendous discernment. The circumstances said, escape. But love said, Stay for the sake of this one soul. They were not guided merely by circumstances, but by what love compelled.

**Jack Arnold** - According to Roman law, any jailer who had a prisoner escape, would pay for that escape with his own life. The jailer, sensing guilt and frustration, did what many Romans did to save honor. He pulled out his sword, put it point up to his heart, and was about to fall on it. Suicide to pagan Romans was considered a duty and a virtue under certain circumstances. But when Paul either saw him silhouetted in the light of the door, or heard him draw his sword, he said, "Stop, do not kill yourself. No prisoner has escaped." Now this was another miracle. God had providentially kept all the prisoners from escaping. Who knows, perhaps some or all of them had become Christians by this time. ([sermon](#))

**Do not harm yourself** - How ironic! Paul the one who had been harmed physically and temporally is the agent through whom the jailer is spared physically and eternally. This reminds me of Paul's statement in 1 Cor 9:12 "we endure all things, that we may cause no hindrance to the gospel of Christ." Also 1 Cor 9:22-23 - "To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some. And I do all things for the sake of the gospel, that I may become a fellow partaker of it."

**Paul Apple** notes another irony - The jailer who is charged with keeping prisoners in chains is the one who is actually in the bondage of Satan and sin – living a meaningless, empty life where he is plugged into Satan's agenda; he is the one that needs to be unshackled

And similarly in prison in 2 Timothy 2:9-10<sup>+</sup> he said " for which (for the Gospel - 2 Ti 2:8<sup>+</sup>) I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal (IN ROME); but the word of God is not imprisoned. For this reason **I endure all things for the sake of those who are chosen** (elect - he did not know who they were - so he endured unfair treatment), so that ([term of purpose](#)) **they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus** and with it eternal glory (Indeed this is exactly what transpired in **another prison setting** some 10+ years earlier in Philippi! Paul made prisons his pulpit! Your "prison" experience can also be your pulpit for proclamation of the Gospel. It all has to do with one's perspective, temporal or eternal.") We all need to be like the greatest theologian in American History Jonathan Edwards who is reported to one time praying "O Lord please stamp eternity on my eyeballs." Yes Lord, do it for Thy great Name and for the glory of the Lamb. Amen.

**Spurgeon** - Every prisoner was loosed from his bands, but not one had escaped; nor had any even attempted to escape, which was another miracle; for men who see their bands broken, and the prison doors open, are pretty sure to run away. These men did not, for a heavenly charm was upon them. They kept in their cells, so that Paul could cry out to the jailor, '-Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.'

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**Matt Chandler** - In Rome during this period of time, if a prisoner escaped or was lost, whoever was responsible for that prisoner would pay the price with his life. Like a lot of blue-collar Joes of today, this jailer has come to identify his life with his job. There are people today who cannot think of themselves except by what they do, and perhaps this man is no different. So when he sees that he might be about to lose a lot of what has been entrusted to him, it's an automatic leap for him to think of taking his own life. He immediately yanks out his sword and gets ready to kill himself. But Paul shows him a better identity, a more fulfilling reality, and a greater duty that transcends everything this guy has previously known.

He shows the jailer this reality first by example. After being tortured, the missionaries sing and pray. After becoming free from their bonds, even though the opportunity for escape and revenge is before them, the missionaries stay to share the gospel. When they have the chance to run away, they stay. And the jailer is blown away. While Paul engaged Lydia through her intellect and the slave girl through spiritual power, he engages the jailer through a living witness to a miracle.

This is how the Philippian church begins—with a Jewish fashionista businesswoman, a demon-possessed slave girl, and a blue-collar ex-GI duty bound to the Roman Empire. Probably not exactly your dream church-planting team, but the Spirit works in strange ways to utterly redeem the unlikeliest and most diverse people. We see in the backstory of Acts 16 the beautiful reconciliation that the gospel achieves, not just of unholy individuals to a holy God but superficially incompatible people to each other! Jesus takes strangers and makes them a family. (Ibid)

**Acts 16:29 And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas,**

- and came : Ac 9:5,6 24:25 Ps 99:1 119:120 Isa 66:2,5 Jer 5:22 10:10 Da 6:26
- and fell : Isa 60:14 Rev 3:9
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE JAILER'S GREAT FEAR

**And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas,**

**He** - The jailer

**Spurgeon** - Conscious of the supernatural, compelled to feel the hand which he had never perceived before, he hastened into the inner prison, where he had thrust the servants of Christ;

**Called for lights** - "The jailor was at the outer door and he wanted lights to see what was inside in the inner prison." (Robertson)

**Jack Arnold** - The jailer was trembling for a number of reasons: (1) he feared the earthquake; (2) he was amazed that the prisoners were still there; (3) he was confounded at the calmness of Paul and Silas; and (4) he was overwhelmed with the presence of God. Just a few moments before, this jailer looked down the edge of his sword and was about to pass into eternity, and he had no answer for life after death. At this point, he came under great conviction of his sins. He was an awakened sinner but he was not yet saved. He was trembling with fear because God was convicting and drawing him to Christ. ([sermon](#))

**Trembling with fear** (entromos from en = in + tromos = tremor or terror) means to be terrified, quaking or trembling with extreme fear. It pictures a person in a quivering condition because of exposure to an overwhelming or threatening circumstance.

**Fell down before** (prostrated himself)(**propipto** from **pros** = preposition expressing motion or direction as toward + **pipto** = to fall) means literally to fall towards or upon something and as here when referring to people means to fall down to or before someone (cf the healed woman in Luke 8:47, the demons before Jesus in Mk 3:11, Luke 8:28)

**NET Note** - The earthquake and the freeing of the prisoners showed that God's power was present. Such power could only be recognized. The **open** doors **opened** the jailer's heart.

**Acts 16:30 and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"**

- brought : Ac 16:24 Job 34:32 Isa 1:16,17 58:6,9 Mt 3:8 5:7 Jas 2:13
- Sirs : Ac 14:15
- what : Ac 16:17 2:37 9:6 22:10 Job 25:4 Lu 3:10 Joh 6:27-29
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## THE GREATEST QUESTION OF ALL MANKIND

"What must I do to be saved" is the greatest question any man or woman can ask. What about the second most important question, "What must I do to be lost?" and the answer is just one word - nothing! Jesus said

"He who believes in Him is not judged; **he who does not believe has been judged already**, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. (Jn 3:18)

**and after he brought them out** - **Robertson** on **brought them out** - He left the other prisoners inside, feeling that he had to deal with these men whom he had evidently heard preach or had heard of their message as servants of the Most High God as the slave girl called them. There may have been superstition behind his fear, but there was evident sincerity.

**Spurgeon** on **sirs** - What a word to address to those who were still in his charge as prisoners!

**He said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"** - This is an amazing statement, for no man seeks after God. So clearly God's Spirit had done a work in his heart. And he is not speaking of physical deliverance because all the prisoners were still there and his physical life was not in danger. But his eternal life was in grave danger and his eyes were opened to see his desperate situation!

**Jack Arnold** - He was asking about spiritual deliverance from the bondage of sin and death. Where did the jailer get enough information to ask this intelligent question? He may have heard the testimony of the slave girl but shrugged it off. He surely knew why Paul and Silas were thrown in jail. Surely he heard Paul and Silas singing and praying in prison. Perhaps Paul and Silas had an opportunity to witness to him. Whatever, he was asking how to be saved from sin, guilt, habits and hell. For a person to be truly saved, he must experience the convicting and drawing work of God whereby a person sees his or her sinfulness before a holy God, realizes that his soul is lost and condemned to a Christless eternity. But that saves no one. One cannot be saved without this, but

that is not salvation. **Many folks have experienced the convicting work of the Spirit of God and never been saved (Ed: And they will tragically have eternity to ponder their rejection of this convicting work!)([sermon](#))**

**What prompted this cry for salvation?** It began with singing by Paul and Silas. As far as we know they did not preach a sermon, although in fact their hymns turned out to be a "sermon" testifying to their supernatural ability to suffer with joy (filled with the Spirit - 1 Th 1:6). There was a supernatural sign with the release from the cell. Does my life preach the Gospel in a ("supernatural") way so that it causes others to cry out for salvation? Ruth Graham once defined a saint as "a person who makes it easy to believe in Jesus!"

**Steven Cole** - Paul did not answer with something to do, but rather with someone to believe in. Believing is not a matter of human effort, but rather of ceasing from our efforts and relying on God alone. As Paul wrote (Ro 4:4-5), "Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness." Saving faith, then, is a matter of ceasing from my own efforts to save myself, and trusting in Jesus Christ to save me.

**What must I do?** - Is not this the question many ask? What **works** must I do? How good must I be? And every world religion and cult provides the answer which in one form or another is summed up in the answer you must do "good works" in order to merit heaven (or whatever they refer to as "heaven"). Only Christianity says the work of salvation has already been done by Jesus, the Savior of all mankind but to receive "credit" for His sacrifice in your place, you must receive His free gift by grace through faith (see **notes** Romans 10:9; 10:10). Trust in the Messiah's finished work on Calvary "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved."! That is the answer to all of mankind's deepest need and most profound question.

Note the Greek verb **must** ([dei](#)) which speaks of absolute (and in context divine) **necessity**. The jailer wanted the definitive answer. He wanted to know "**the** way" not "**a** way" like the lost world which is tragically and vainly searching for God via manifold, oftentimes bizarre, humanly contrived religious teachings and exercises.

**Harry Ironside** - Bishop John Taylor Smith used to tell how, when he was a Chaplain-General of the British Army, the candidates for chaplaincy were brought to him and given a hypothetical situation to deal with. "Now, I want you to show me how you would deal with a man. We will suppose I am a soldier who has been wounded on the field of battle. I have three minutes to live and I am afraid to die because I do not know Christ. Tell me, how may I be saved and die with the assurance that all is well?" If the applicant began to beat around the bush and talk about the true church and ordinances and so on, the good Bishop would say, "That won't do. I have only three minutes to live. Tell me what I must do." And as long as Bishop Smith was Chaplain-General, unless a candidate could answer that question, he could not become a chaplain in the army. I wish that were true of our own army. What answer would you give to a man with only three minutes to live? Can you find a better one than this?-"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." There are so many who say, "I do not understand which is the true church." **Never mind!** Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Then some say, "I do not understand the true nature of the sacrament of the Lord's supper." **Never mind!** Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. "Yes, but my life has been so wicked. I feel I ought to make restitution first for the sins of my past." **Never mind!** Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. "I am so afraid I might not hold out." **Never mind!** This is God's message to any poor sinner today: Put your trust in the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved, and your house. The same offer is for your house as for you. When God saves you, it is evident He wants to save your whole house.

**ILLUSTRATION** - The story is told of a wealthy man who, although he was outwardly religious, was not a Christian. He had in his employ an old gardener, a true believer, who tried to show him the emptiness of mere religion without Christ. Now it happened that there was one tree on the rich man's estate which never bore any fruit. However, one day as the owner was walking in his orchard, he saw some beautiful apples hanging on it. Imagine his surprise, especially when he went to pick some and found them to be tied on! The gardener by this simple illustration wanted to point out to his employer the difference between real Christianity and pious sham. Religion without Christ is like a barren tree on which the fruit is merely "tied on"!

Have you ever actually trusted Christ, or are you simply going through the motions? Are those so-called "**good works**" of yours just "tied on," or are they the genuine fruit of a new life?

**W. P. Loveless** says it well "The only "works" of unsaved men that will endure in Heaven are the nail prints in Christ's hands!"

**MacDonald** wisely comments that "This question must precede every genuine case of conversion. A man must know he is lost before he can be saved. It is premature to tell a man how to be saved until first he can say from his heart, I truly deserve to go to hell... Many people today seem to have difficulty knowing what it means to believe. However, when a sinner realizes he is lost, helpless, hopeless, hell-bound, and when he is told to believe on Christ as Lord and Savior, he knows exactly what it means. It is the only thing left that he can do! ([Believer's Bible Commentary](#)):

Salvation comes when a person recognizes their personal state of sinfulness and certain judgment and thus their need for salvation.



**David Guzik** - This is how God wants our lives to be: Natural magnets drawing people to Him. Our Christianity should make others want what we have with God.

**Arthur Pink** - When the Philippian jailer asked “What must I do to be saved?” all the apostle answered was “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.” Waiving now the fact that that was not the idle inquiry of one who was still in love with the world and taking his fill of its pleasures, but instead the distressed cry of one who was desperate, let it be pointed out that while believing in Christ is a simple and easy act considered in itself, yet it becomes a very hard (see **notes** on Matthew 7:14 where the way is “narrow” = thlibo = trouble) and difficult thing to us by reason of the opposition made thereto by our inward corruptions and the temptations of Satan.

**Morris** commenting on the miraculous deliverance of the prisoners writes that “In such a city as Philippi, so thoroughly committed to pantheistic occultism and so antipathetic to Jewish monotheism, it would take a notable testimonial miracle to provide a breakthrough for the gospel among its Greek citizenry. The jailer immediately recognized that such a miracle had occurred, and that these men were, indeed, as the evil spirit in the damsel had proclaimed, “servants of the Most High God” (Acts 16:16) who could show him “the way of salvation” (Acts 16:16). Hence his question.” (TNTC)

**Saved** ([4982](#))([sozo](#)) has the basic meaning of rescuing one from great peril. Additional nuances include to protect, keep alive, preserve life, deliver, heal, be made whole. And remember that “A person's entire salvation is taken care of, past, present and future, the moment he commits to Christ.” (Arnold)

**Wiersbe** - “What must I do to be saved?” is the cry of lost people worldwide, and we had better be able to give them the right answer. The legalists in the church would have replied, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved” (Acts 15:1, NKJV). But Paul knew the right answer—faith in Jesus Christ. In the Book of Acts, the emphasis is on faith in Jesus Christ alone (Acts 2:38–39; Acts 4:12; Acts 8:12, 37; Acts 10:10–43; Acts 13:38–39). (BEC)

**Acts 16:31 They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”**

- **Believe** : Ac 2:38,39 4:12 8:37 11:13,14 13:38,39 15:11 Isa 45:22 Hab 2:4 Mk 16:16 Joh 1:12 3:15,16,36 6:40,47 7:37,38 11:25,26 20:31 Ro 5:1,2 10:9,10 Ga 3:22,26 Eph 2:7,8 1Jn 5:10-13
- and thy : Ac 16:15,32 2:39 18:8 Ge 17:7 18:19 Jer 32:39 Ro 11:16 Ga 3:14
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## AN URGENT COMMAND TO BELIEVE

**Believe** - Is in the aorist imperative which conveys a sense of urgency = Do this now. These words must be connected with “believe” as well as “be saved.” Don’t procrastinate for you may not have tomorrow (2 Cor 6:2). Don’t prevaricate when you have just heard the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth in the Gospel! If you don’t take a stand on the truth, you may fall for the lie of Satan.

**S Lewis Johnson** - And, notice, it is so simple that “believe” is the term that gains for us the blessings of eternal life. It’s not believe and be baptized; it’s not believe and repent – or even repent and believe – for the man who believes and who is so convinced of his lost condition through the despair that comes when he realize that he is lost and commits himself to the Lord Jesus Christ is obviously a person who has been given the gift of repentance. That’s why in the New Testament we read, the apostles will say, “It was said of them they preached repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.” But when a man believes, truly believes, he has repented. So, “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved.” There is no contradiction between repent and believe and the simple believe. Simple belief comprehends that and must include that. ([Sermon](#))

**John MacArthur** - To believe in the Lord Jesus means first to believe He is who He claimed to be. The apostle John wrote, “These have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:31). Second, it means to believe in what He did. Paul succinctly summarized the work of Christ in 1 Corinthians 15:3-4. To the Romans he wrote (Ro 10:9-10) (Ibid)

**Paul Apple** points out that “Paul and Silas don’t confuse the issue with the depths of doctrinal instruction about the sovereignty of God and election – their message is not: “Well I don’t know if salvation is possible for you or not ...” Simply “Believe in the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved”

**Robertson** - Believe on the Lord Jesus. This is what Peter told Cornelius (Acts 10:43). This is the heart of the matter for both the

jailer and his house.

**NET Note** - In this context it refers to trusting the sovereign God's power to deliver, which events had just pictured for the jailer.

If God could deliver physically, He could deliver spiritually.

**Jack Arnold** - What does it mean to believe in Christ? Many people say they believe in Christ but are not saved. To believe means to trust, commit, rely upon. It is not enough to believe about Christ intellectually, but one must believe on and in Christ. To believe in Christ is to abandon to Christ as our only hope of salvation. We stop trusting in self, human works, culture, the church, our baptism, our confirmation and we trust only in Christ and no one else to save us. He becomes our Savior, God and Master. Notice once again that it is not good works, or theology, or religious ritual, or church membership which saves us. It is faith in Christ. Notice once again that it does not say believe in Calvin, Luther, Augustine or even the Apostles, but believe in Christ. Quite often you will hear Christians say, "You don't have to do anything for salvation, except believe in Christ." Is not faith something we do? Yes, faith in Christ is what every man must exercise if he is to be saved. God does not believe for a man; a man believes by an act of his will. Man most certainly does do something to appropriate salvation. He believes. Is not faith then a work? No, faith is a gift from God, and it is God who works to bring a man to faith in Christ. Yet, a man's responsibility to be saved is to believe in Christ. He will not and cannot be saved until he believes on the Lord Jesus Christ with the mind, the heart, the will (volition, intellect and sensibility).

([Sermon](#))

**John Phillips** wrote, "Believe: not in a creed but in the Christ, not in a statement of faith, not in baptism, not in good works, not in rite or ritual—but in the Lord Jesus Christ, in that glorious living, dynamic person who is alive forevermore and is mighty to save. In a Master—the Lord; in a Man—Jesus; in a Messiah—Christ. Lord. That enthrones Him in the will; Jesus. That enthrones Him in the heart; Christ. That enthrones Him in the intellect." (Exploring Acts)

**Believe** (4100) ([pisteuo](#)) means to consider something to be true and therefore worthy of one's trust. To accept as true, genuine, or real. To have a firm conviction as to the goodness, efficacy, or ability of something or someone. To consider to be true. To accept the word or evidence of.

Greek expert **W E Vine** defines **belief** as consisting of

- (1) a firm conviction which produces full acknowledgment of God's revelation of Truth - (2Thes 2:11 -"in order that they all may be judged who did not **believe** [pisteuo] the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness.")
- (2) a personal surrender to the Truth (Jn 1:12 "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who **believe** [pisteuo] in His name") and
- (3) a conduct inspired by and consistent with that surrender.

Pisteuo in Acts -

Acts 2:44; Acts 4:4; Acts 4:32; Acts 5:14; Acts 8:12; Acts 8:13; Acts 8:37; Acts 9:26; Acts 9:42; Acts 10:43; Acts 11:17; Acts 11:21; Acts 13:12; Acts 13:39; Acts 13:41; Acts 13:48; Acts 14:1; Acts 14:23; Acts 15:5; Acts 15:7; Acts 15:11; Acts 16:31; Acts 16:34; Acts 17:12; Acts 17:34; Acts 18:8; Acts 18:27; Acts 19:2; Acts 19:4; Acts 19:18; Acts 21:20; Acts 21:25; Acts 22:19; Acts 24:14; Acts 26:27; Acts 27:25

**Illustration**: [John G. Paton](#), pioneer missionary to the New Hebrides in the Pacific, was hard pressed to find a word for 'believe,' in the sense of trust, in the language of the South Sea Islanders, for who he was translating the New Testament. Finally, he found the solution, by thus translating the answer of Paul and Silas to the question of the Philippian jailer, 'What must I do to be saved?' to "Lean your whole weight upon the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved." Only as we believe on the Lord Jesus will we be saved.

**Herschel Ford** wrote, "There is a difference between believing something **about** Jesus and believing **on** Him. We can believe that He is the Virgin-born Son of God, that He lived a sinless life, that He died on the cross, that He rose from the grave, that He is coming again—we can believe all these things and still go to hell. We must put our belief into action—we must trust Him as a sick man trusts the doctor, as a drowning man trusts the lifeguard. We must trust Him with our soul and our future as a man trusts the bank with his money." Do you have that kind of trust in Jesus? Have you believed on the Lord Jesus Christ?

**You and your whole household** - Luke is not advocating salvation by proxy. In other words, he is not saying the jailer's salvation automatically included everyone in his house and that they had no need to respond to the Gospel. The fact is that each member of the **household** had to personally believe in order to be saved. The example of the head of the **household** made it easier for them, but they, too, needed to believe to be saved, a salvation which they testified to by being baptized.

**Wiersbe** - The phrase "and thy house" does not mean that the faith of the jailer would automatically bring salvation to his family. Each sinner must trust Christ personally in order to be born again, for we cannot be saved "by proxy." The phrase means "and your

household will be saved if they will also believe." We must not read into this statement the salvation of infants (with or without baptism) because it is clear that Paul was dealing with people old enough to hear the Word (Acts 16:32), to believe, and to rejoice (Acts 16:34). So-called "household salvation" has no basis in the Word of God—that is, that the decision of the head of the household brings salvation to the members of the household. The people in the household of Cornelius were old enough to respond to his call (Acts 10:24) and to understand the Word and believe (Acts 10:44; 11:15–17; 15:7–9). The household of Crispus was composed of people old enough to hear and believe God's Word (Acts 18:8). There is no suggestion here that the adults made decisions for infants or children.

**Guzik** observes that in reading this passage "Some have worried that Paul's invitation to salvation here is too easy, and would promote an easy-believism and a cheap grace. Others refuse to preach repentance, claiming that this text says that it is not necessary. Paul never specifically called the keeper of the prison to repent because he was already repenting. We see the humble repentance of the jailer in that he fell down trembling, in the full idea of the word believe (pistis, which means to trust in, rely on, and cling to), and in the command to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ).

**Faith** can be summarized in the acrostic

**F**orsaking

**A**ll

**I**

**T**ake

**H**im

We are to forsake all (repent of our sins) and to take Him (by faith turn to God for our salvation) (Acts 20:21).

## THE LORD JESUS

Could it be any clearer? Belief is in the "**Lord Jesus**" according to Paul. No one is called upon to make Jesus "**Lord**" but simply to believe in Him! He is "**Lord!**" Ro 10:9+ is similar Paul declaring "if you confess with your mouth **Jesus as Lord**, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, **you will be saved.**" Could it be stated any clearer? Belief in "**Jesus as Lord**" results in genuine salvation.

**Lord** (**master, owner**)<sup>(2962)</sup> (**kurios**) conveys the sense of the supreme one, one who is sovereign and possesses absolute authority, absolute ownership and uncontested power.

**Larkin** writes "But it is belief in the **Lord Jesus** that brings salvation. Paul knows no separation between receiving Jesus as Savior and following him as **Lord**, as some contemporary theologians may argue ([Zane Hodges 1981](#); Ryrie 1989). (The IVP New Testament Commentary Series – Acts)

At the outset should be noted that in the NT Jesus is referred to as **Lord (Kurios)** more frequently than by any other title. Therefore it behooves us to understand the truth concerning Jesus as **Lord** and not allow ourselves to become side tracked in debate over so-called "Lordship salvation". The indisputable Biblical facts are that faith in Jesus saves and Jesus is Lord. This confession of "**Jesus is Lord**" became a direct affront to the practice of emperor worship. Certain cities even built temples for Caesar-worship as was the case in Smyrna where the command was to honor the emperor by confessing "**Caesar is Lord**". To declare "**Jesus is Lord**" became a crime punishable by death, resulting in the martyrdom. I think the first century believers understood "Lordship" in a way modern believers would find it difficult to comprehend! (cp Jesus' "prophetic" warning in Mt 10:22, 23, 24, 25 where "master" is kurios)

**Lord** is not merely a name that composes a title, but signifies a call to action so that every saint should willingly, reverently bow down to Jesus Christ. If Christ is our **Lord**, we are to live under Him, consciously, continually submitting our wills to him as His loyal, loving bondservants ("love slaves"), always seeking first His Kingdom and His righteousness (Mt 6:33-[note](#)). According to this practical working "definition" beloved we all need to ask ourselves "Is Jesus Christ my Lord?". "Do I arise each day, acknowledges this is the day the Lord hath made?" (Ps 118:24-[note](#)) "Do I surrender my will to His will as I begin each day?" (cp Ro 12:1-[note](#), Ro 12:2-[note](#)) Beloved, don't misunderstand. None of us have "arrived" in this area of Jesus as Lord of our lives. And it is precisely for that reason that Peter commands us to continually "**grow** ([present imperative](#)) in the grace (unmerited favor, power to live the supernatural, abundant life in Christ) and knowledge (not just intellectual but transformational) of our **Lord** and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen." (2Pe 3:18-[note](#)) So do not be discouraged. Don't "throw in the towel" as they say. Keep on keeping on, pressing (continually = [present tense](#)) "on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (Php 3:14-[note](#))

**Boice** adds that "Citizens of the empire were required to burn a pinch of incense to the reigning Caesar and utter the words **Kyrios** Kaisar ("Caesar is Lord!"). It is this that the early Christians refused to do and for which they were themselves thrown to the wild lions or crucified. It was not that Christians were forbidden to worship God. They were free to worship any god they chose so long as they also acknowledged Caesar. Romans were tolerant. But when Christians denied to Caesar the allegiance that they believed belonged to the true God only, they were executed. (Daniel: An Expository Commentary)

**Jesus** (2424)(**lesous**) is **transliteration** of the Greek **lesous**, which in turn is the transliteration of the Hebrew name **Jehoshua** (Yehoshua) or **Jeshua** (Yeshua) which mean *Jehovah is help* or *Jehovah is salvation*. Stated another way the Greek **lesous** corresponds to the OT **Jehoshua** (Yehoshua) which is contracted as **Jeshua**(Yeshua).

**As an aside** the reader should realize that any attempt to "define" **lesous** is fraught with huge gaps, for this Name (when applied to our Lord Jesus Christ) is indeed "the Name which is above every name, that at the Name of **Jesus** every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth" (Php 2:9-10) and "there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other Name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12) Indeed, His very **Name "lesous"** conveys His supreme purpose for coming to earth -- to save men dead in their trespasses and sins (Mt 1:21) Our goal should be to "fix our eyes on **Jesus** the Author and Perfecter of faith." (Heb 12:2)

**Shall be saved, healed, made well or whole** (4982)(**sozo**) has the basic meaning of rescuing one from great peril. Additional nuances include to protect, keep alive, preserve life, deliver, heal, be made whole. **Sozo** is sometimes used of physical deliverance from danger of perishing (see Mt 8:25; Mt 14:30; Lk 23:35; Acts 27:20, 27:31), physical healing from sickness (Mt 9:21, 22; Mk 5:23, Acts 4:9), and deliverance from demonic possession (Lk 8:36). More often as in the present context **sozo** refers to **salvation** in a spiritual sense as illustrated in the following passages: Matthew recorded the angel's conversation with Joseph declaring

"She (Mary) will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will **save** (sozo) His people from their sins." (Mt 1:21)

And so here **sozo** is equated with deliverance from sins (guilt and power of) with Jesus' name being a transliteration of Joshua meaning "Jehovah is salvation".

#### **Related Resource:**

- [Three Tenses of Salvation](#)
- [Can a person believe in some sense but not be saved?](#)
- [What does it mean to have faith in Jesus?](#)
- [What does it mean that Jesus saves?](#)
- [What is the way of salvation?](#)

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**Illustration:** A man stood up in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada four years after the sinking of the Titanic in a testimony meeting and this is what he said. He said, I am a survivor of the Titanic. When I was drifting alone on a spar that awful night, the tide brought a man toward me in the sea and his name was John Harper. He was hanging to a piece of wreckage. And as he neared me, he said, Man, are you saved? No, I'm not, I replied. He said, Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. And the waves took him away but strange to say, they brought him back a little later and he said, Are you saved yet? And I said, No. And he said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved. And I watched him go down. And he said, there alone in the night with two miles of water under me, I believed and I was saved. He said, I was John Harper's last convert. You know, there's a lot of sinking men in this world. It's a simple message. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and...what?...thou shalt be saved. (from Paul Apple)

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#### **GOOD QUESTION! -**

"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved."- Acts 16:30-31

"Finding the right questions is as crucial as finding the right answers," says devotional writer Henri Nouwen. Yet how easy it is to run ahead of God's Spirit as we talk to nonbelievers about Christ, giving pre-packaged answers before we listen to their questions.

This tendency was highlighted several years ago when someone scrawled the words "Christ is the answer!" on the side of a building. A cynical passerby added these words: "What is the question?"

Paul and Silas, thrown into prison for the gospel's sake, provoked a deep spiritual question in the heart of their jailer. This wasn't achieved, however, by preaching a three-point sermon at him. Instead, they prayed and sang hymns to God. When an earthquake opened the prison doors and broke their chains, the jailer tried to kill himself, fearing that he would be put to death if his prisoners

escaped. But Paul and Silas stopped him by choosing to stay in prison for his sake. At this he cried out, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (Acts 16:30).

Today, as then, the Spirit will create the right questions in people's hearts and make them ready for the right answer -- Jesus Christ. -- [Joanie Yoder](#) ([Click to go to the full devotional including a related picture and a link at the bottom of the page to one of their excellent devotional booklets.](#) Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Tell the sweet story of Christ and His love,  
Tell of His power to forgive;  
Others will trust Him if only you prove  
True, every moment you live.  
-- Wilson

Christians worth their salt  
make others thirsty for the water of life.

---

## THE BIGGEST DECISION -

Decisions! Decisions! Decisions! We're constantly making decisions. Some are trivial, like, "Which outfit will I wear today?" Others are life-shaping, like, "Should I take that job and move my family clear across the country?" But common sense tells us that some are vastly more important than others.

A group of doctors ran an ad in a New York newspaper. Over the picture of an attractive woman, the caption read, "The most important decision I ever made was choosing my spouse. The second, my plastic surgeon." The text of the ad then suggested that the order of priorities could be reversed!

Choosing a spouse is immeasurably more important than choosing a plastic surgeon. But deciding to put your trust in Jesus as your Savior is the most important decision you can make in life.

The apostle Peter told a group of unbelievers about Jesus and encouraged them to turn from their sin and trust Him (Acts 2). Peter's words speak to us today as well. If you haven't accepted Christ's free gift of forgiveness, pray to Him and ask Him to save you. And once you've done that, make the second most important decision: Determine to follow Christ's leading daily. -- Vernon C. Grounds ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

If you'd like to know the love of God the Father,  
Come to Him through Jesus Christ, His loving Son;  
He'll forgive your sins and save your soul forever,  
And you'll love forevermore this faithful One.  
-- Felten

Life's biggest decision is what you do with Jesus.

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**C H Spurgeon - Faith's Checkbook - What of My House?** - "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."—Acts 16:31

THIS gospel for a man with a sword at his throat is the gospel for me. This would suit me if I were dying, and it is all that I need while I am living. I look away from self and sin and all idea of personal merit, and I trust the Lord Jesus as the Saviour whom God has given. I believe in Him; I rest on Him; I accept Him to be my all in all. Lord I am saved, and I shall be saved to all eternity, for I believe in Jesus. Blessed be thy name for this. May I daily prove by my life that I am saved from selfishness and worldliness and every form of evil.

But those last words about my "house." Lord, I would not run away with half a promise when thou dost give a whole one. I beseech thee, save all my family. Save the nearest and dearest. Convert the children, and the grandchildren, if I have any. Be gracious to my servants and all who dwell under my roof or work for me. Thou makest this promise to me personally if I believe in the Lord Jesus; I beseech thee to do as thou hast said.

I would go over in my prayer every day the names of all my brothers and sisters, parents, children, friends, relatives, and servants and give thee no rest till that word is fulfilled: "and thy house."

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## Acts 16:31 - Rescued By [C. P. Hia](#)

1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 20-25

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. —Acts 16:31

Manuel Gonzalez was the first rescue worker to reach the 33 miners trapped for 69 days in a Chilean mine explosion in 2010. At great risk to his own life, he went underground more than 2,000 feet to bring the trapped men back to the surface. The world watched in amazement as one by one each miner was rescued and transported to freedom.

The Bible tells us of an even more amazing rescue. Because of Adam and Eve's disobedience, all of mankind is trapped in sin (Gen. 2:17; 3:6,19; Rom. 5:12). Unable to break free, everyone faces certain death—physically and eternally. But God has provided a Rescuer—Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Everyone who accepts the free gift of salvation offered through His death and resurrection is freed from sin's grip and its resulting death penalty (Rom. 5:8-11; 10:9-11; Eph. 2:1-10).

Jesus Christ is the "firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Cor. 15:20). He was the first to be raised from the dead, never to die again. Likewise, all will be given life who put their faith in Christ (Rom. 8:11).

Are you still trapped in your sins? Accept Jesus' gift of salvation and enjoy the freedom of life in Christ and eternity with Him (Acts 16:31; Eph. 2:1; Col. 2:13). ([Click to go to the full devotional including a related picture and a link at the bottom of the page to one of their excellent devotional booklets.](#) Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Thinking It Over

What keeps you from calling out to God for spiritual rescue? Do you fear that you are too bad for God's grace? Read and think about Romans 3:23-26.

**Through His cross, Jesus rescues and redeems.**

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## Jesus, Lord, Christ - Robert Neighbour

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

**1. The name "Jesus" takes us to the Cross.** "Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins."

The name "Jesus" carries with it, "God manifest in the flesh." It is the name that leads us from the manger and to Calvary's Cross, where the atonement was made. It is no marvel that saints delight to sing about "Jesus," but saints should remember that "Jesus" means far more than Mary's son, and the "Son of Man." Jesus was begotten of the Holy Ghost; He was that Holy One, the sinless One, the One Who knew no sin, Who did no sin, and in Whom is no sin.

The name "Jesus," links us to the earth-life of our Lord, and to the sufferings of His Cross. It is the name of Calvary and of Golgotha.

**2. We have the name "Lord."**

This name is particularly used in reference to Christ, ascended and seated at the Father's right hand. It is the name that suggests "authority" and "power," Christ as Lord, sits far above all principality and powers, and far above the world rulers of this darkness. No man can call Jesus, "Lord," but by the Holy Ghost. After Jesus had suffered and died; after He had been raised from the dead; after He had ascended up on high; after He had been seated at the right hand of power — there was given Him the name, "Lord." God proclaimed Him, both Lord and Christ.

Those of us, who are saved, should delight in speaking of Him as Lord.

**3. Christ.**

This is His Messianic name. He is Christ because He is the anointed. He is Christ because He is to come again.

No wonder then that Paul told the jailer to believe on Him as Jesus and as Lord and as Christ. This we all should do. It is not enough to see Him crucified and risen — we must see Him the Anointed of God.

---

## Acts 16:31 THE ONE YOU CAN TRUST

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. Acts 16:31

While driving along the highway, I found myself behind a car bearing a bumper sticker which said, "Vote for Robert Chase—THE MAN You CAN TRUST." In this day of "gaps," and especially the "credibility gap," I can see why this politician chose that particular

slogan. His hope was that the voters in his district would think of him as a man they could believe, one who would make good on every promise he gave. I know nothing about this Mr. Chase, but I am acquainted with Someone who can be trusted — a Man with a perfect record and who has the praise and endorsement of God Himself — One who keeps His Word. It is the Lord Jesus Christ. After examining the Savior, Pilate declared, "I find no fault in him." And Judas, following his dastardly deed, cried out in remorse, "I have betrayed innocent blood." God the Father expressed His approval of Him, for at His baptism a voice came from Heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

We should also believe what He said, for He predicted that He would die and rise again the third day — and He did! His resurrection was proof that He was everything He claimed to be—truly the Son of Man, and truly the Son of God. It was a declaration that He had fully paid for the sins of the whole world. Forgiveness of sin and life everlasting is now offered to all who put their faith in Him. John tells us in his gospel, "But these [things] are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:31). Yes, the Lord Jesus is "the One you can trust." ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Trusting as the moments fly,  
Trusting as the days go by;  
Trusting Him whate'er befall,  
Trusting Jesus, that is all!  
—Page

He pleases God best who trusts Christ most!

---

### **Acts 16:31 - Getting To Heaven** By [Dave Branon](#)

Romans 3:21-28

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. —Acts 16:31

While working with third- and fourth-graders at our church's Vacation Bible School, I decided to give all 25 of the children a gift on the last day. But I told them that in order to receive it, they would each have to tell me how a person can get to heaven.

It was interesting to hear what these 9- and 10-year-olds said. Many were clear that salvation is through faith in Jesus Christ, but some were not yet equipped to explain the gospel. "You have to be good and go to Sunday school," said one. Another asked tentatively, "You have to pray to God?" Still another: "If you are nice to your friends and obey your mom and dad."

As I gently tried to direct the thinking of each child to the central element of salvation—faith in Jesus who died to pay for our sins and then rose again—I thought that these kids represented so many others in our world who don't yet understand the gospel.

How about you? Are your ideas about salvation based on biblical truth? Think about the importance of what Jesus did for you. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 16:31). There is so much more at stake than getting a free gift for answering a question. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#)) ([Click to go to the full devotional including a related picture and a link at the bottom of the page to one of their excellent devotional booklets.](#)) Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

#### **A Matter Of Faith**

Jesus paid the penalty for your sins by His death. When you admit you are a sinner and place your faith in Him alone for forgiveness, you will be reconciled to God.

Believing Christ died—that's history; believing Christ died for me—that's salvation.

---

### **Faith in Christ - Robert Neighbour**

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

Faith is an evident token of salvation. Frequently we hear the expression: "Is it possible that nothing but simple faith can save us?" Others say: "That's altogether too easy." "Am I simply to believe in Christ?" "Must I not add works and a faithful Christian life, and noble deeds before I can know that I am saved?"

Illustration: A miner was preparing to take a preacher through the mines. As they were walking, the minister was pressing upon the miner his eternal salvation. Something like the following conversation took place.

The minister said: "You must receive Jesus Christ as your Saviour. Simply accept Him, trust Him, believe Him and the work is done."

The miner replied; "Preacher, that is too dead easy. I want to do something. You can't make me think that the salvation of my soul can be made secure by my simply trusting Christ."

At this juncture they came to the shaft and stood waiting for the elevator. When the elevator was ready and the door opened, the miner, touching the minister's elbow, said: "Step aboard, preacher, and we'll go down into the bowels of the earth." The minister stood back, and, looking the miner full in the face, he said, "Do you mean to tell me that all I've got to do is to step aboard, — that's too dead easy." The miner replied: "It is not so dead easy as you think, it cost the company thousands of dollars to sink this shaft, and a number of lives were lost before it was completed. Your stepping into the cage, is not all there is to it. The rest is already accomplished, and therefore, there is nothing else left for you.

"And salvation was not so dead easy," said the preacher. "It cost God the gift of His Son, and it cost Jesus Christ His own precious Blood; but the work is all done; the door is open wide, and all the poor sinner needs to do is to step aboard."

When we believe in the Lord Jesus Christ; when we have received Him as our Saviour, we know we have eternal life. God has promised in many Scriptures to save the believer, and when God stretches forth His hand, who can draw it back? When God has spoken, who can disannul it?

If believing in Christ is an evident token of salvation, unbelief is an evident token of condemnation. One does not need to be an immoral wretch in order to be lost: Unbelief is sufficient. "He that believeth not is condemned already" (John 3:18). "And all unbelievers \* \* shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone" (Rev. 21:8)

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### Acts 16:31 Fantastic Offers By Dave Branon

[God's] abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus. —1 Peter 1:3

I am amazed at the unbelievable offers that flood my e-mail box every day. Recently, I added up the offers of free money that came to me in a week, and my "take" totaled \$26 million. But each of those offers was a fraud. Every one—from a \$1 million prize to a \$7 million offer—was nothing but a lie sent by unscrupulous people to squeeze money from me.

We're all vulnerable to fantastic offers—to scams that in reality pay off with nothing but trouble. We are offered false hope that ends in dashed dreams.

There is one offer, however, that is genuine, though fantastic beyond belief. It's the offer God makes to us—salvation through faith in Jesus' finished work on the cross: "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). It is an offer that cost Him greatly—and we get the benefits. The book of Romans tells us, "He was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification" (4:25 niv).

By saying yes to salvation, we can have hope (Titus 1:2), peace (Rom. 5:1), forgiveness (Eph. 1:7), incomparable riches (2:7), and redemption (4:30). This is the real deal. Jesus' death and resurrection guarantees it. ([Click to go to the full devotional including a related picture and a link at the bottom of the page to one of their excellent devotional booklets.](#) Reprinted by permission from Our Daily Bread Ministries. Please do not repost the full devotional without their permission.)

Our salvation was infinitely costly to God, but it is absolutely free to us.

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### Acts 16:31

#### Read Romans 4:1-5

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.- Luke 19:10

If a man unable to swim fell into deep water and was crying out for help, what would you do? Throw him a book on Five Easy Swimming Lessons? Shout encouragement? How about jumping into the water and crying out, "Just look at me, brother! Follow my example! I'll teach you how to swim and save your-self!" You would do no such thing! This drowning man doesn't need swimming lessons. It's too late for that! What he needs is a savior, one who will come to him in his desperate state, reach down, lift him up, and deliver him from the clutches of death.

It's the same way with man's spiritual condition. The Bible says that "all have sinned" and that the "wages of sin is death." Everyone born into this world has fallen into sin, and in its clammy embrace is doomed to destruction. The only means of escape must be through a "Savior," one who stoops down in grace and delivers the needy soul from judgment. It is impossible for a man to learn to "save himself." Trying his best won't do, and following the example of others is of no avail. What he needs is a Savior. How thankful we should be then that "the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). He delivers all who trust Him for their salvation. Even as a drowning person must relax and cease his struggling in the arms of his rescuer, we must do the same with this Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Someone has aptly expressed it in this way, "Let go and let God." "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31). ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by](#)



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I was sinking deep in sin, far from the peaceful shore,  
Very deeply stained within, sinking to rise no more;  
But the Master of the sea heard my despairing cry,  
From the waters lifted me — now safe am I.  
—Rowe

The God who was wise enough to make a perfect man is loving enough to rescue a fallen one

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### **Liking and Accepting - Puritan Daily Readings**

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

There is a liking and an accepting of Christ. First, the liking of Christ for His excellency, grace, and suitableness, which is far above all other beloveds whatever, thus preferring Him in the judgment and mind above them all. No other beloveds are to be compared to Him. It views also legal righteousness, blamelessness before men, uprightness of conversation, duties upon conviction, and concludes of all as Paul does, "Doubtless, I count all these things loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord" (Phil. 3:8). So, also, the church rejects all appearing assistances whatever (Hosea 14:3), as goodly as Asshur, as promising as idols, that God alone may be preferred. And this is the soul's entrance into conjugal communion with Jesus Christ as to personal grace, the constant preferring Him above all pretenders to its affections, counting all loss and dung in comparison of Him...Second, there is the accepting of Christ by the will, as its only husband, Lord, and Savior. This is called "receiving" of Christ (John 1:12); and is not intended only for that solemn act whereby at first entrance we close with Him, but also for the constant frame of the soul in abiding with Him and owning of Him as such. It is when the soul consents to take Christ on His own terms, to save him in His own way, and says, "Lord, I would have had thee and salvation in my way, that it might have been partly of mine endeavors, and as it were by the works of the law; I am now willing to receive thee and to be saved in thy way, merely by grace: and though I would have walked according to my own mind, yet now I wholly give up myself to be ruled by thy Spirit."

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**Adrian Rogers** - Acts 16:31 Sometimes, a person will say, "Yes, I am saved. I remember walking down the aisle when I was nine years old, greeting the pastor, and giving my heart to Jesus. I may not be living for God right now, but..." Many people want to go back to an event from the past. Some even say, "If you cannot show me the place and tell me the moment when you received Jesus, then you are not saved." But this is not biblical and is not so. The Bible never says that you will know you are saved by something you recall in the past. If you are believing now, then you did believe. (What Every Christian Ought to Know)

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**Dying Witness** - Occasionally God calls one of His children to give his or her life as an act of sacrifice and witness for Him. One such believer was John Harper, a Scotsman who was traveling on the Titanic en route to Chicago. Harper was scheduled to become pastor of the Moody Memorial Church in Chicago, but he never made it. However, another Scotsman who survived the disaster later told how Harper, clinging to a piece of debris, called out to his fellow countryman, "Are ye saved, mon? He then quoted Acts 16:31 just before he drowned. The young man was not saved physically, but he took Harper's invitation to heart and put his faith in Christ. Today in the Word,

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**Cruel King** -The following story was often told by Charles Haddon Spurgeon: "A cruel king called one of his subjects into his presence and asked him his occupation. The man responded, 'I'm a blacksmith.' The ruler then ordered him to go and make a chain of a certain length."The man obeyed, returning after several months to show it to the monarch. Instead of receiving praise for what he had done, however, he was instructed to make the chain twice as long."When that assignment was completed, the blacksmith presented his work to the king, but again was commanded, 'Go back and double its length!' This procedure was repeated several times. At last the wicked tyrant directed the man to be bound in the chains of his own making and cast into a fiery furnace." Like that cruel king, sin exacts from its servants a dreadful price: "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). But the good news is the last part of that verse: "The gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord." If you are not a Christian, consider the consequence of your sin. Then "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). - R W De Haan

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### **Acts 16:31 Saving Faith**

#### **Allen Ross**

As Paul and Silas were singing and praying in the prison, the Lord caused a great earthquake to shake the prison open and loosen all the prisoners from their chains. The jailor was in a panic, thinking that he had lost the prisoners--he was going to take his life rather than face the wrath of his superiors. But Paul called out to him that they were all still there. Obviously confronted with a mighty work of God on behalf of these servants of God, the jailor then asked what he needed to do to be saved. The answer is the

simple sounding "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). But it is far from simple, easy "beliefism." What exactly is saving faith? If we analyze this line for a few minutes we will be able to understand what is implied by the words. We must look at the meaning of "believe in" and then the meaning of "the Lord Jesus."

There are a number of levels to belief, but not all of them are saving faith. The reformers had to clarify what saving faith was in view of the tremendous changes that were taking place. If salvation was by faith alone, what would that faith look like? Their analysis of saving faith has stood the test of time. There are three parts. First is the intellectual reception of what is to be believed. You have to understand the message, the gospel. This does not mean the understanding has to be at a theologically profound level. But it does mean you have to apprehend what the message is. We will come back to this. Second, there is the assent, the agreement with the message. You have to think that the facts of the gospel are true. And third, there must be commitment. Knowing what the message is, and agreeing that it is true, are good, but there is one essential part to add for saving faith. You have to commit your life to it. Jesus made this clear when he called for people to take his yoke upon them (Matt. 11:29). He was asking people to exchange yokes, to follow him and his teachings instead of the current religious leaders, for he could give them salvation.

This brings us back to the content of the faith. What is the message to be believed? Here it was summed up as "the Lord Jesus." These two words give us the double emphasis of the gospel message, that he is the Lord and that he is the Savior. Or, to put it in another way, you have to believe in the person and works of Jesus. The works can be summed up in the gospel: that Jesus died according to the Scripture, that he was buried, and that he rose again according to the Scripture. In other words, you have to believe in the death, burial and resurrection, the facts, as they are explained by the Bible. The death was the sacrifice for our sins, the burial was proof that he died and took so paid for our sins, and the resurrection declares that he is who he said he was, the Son of God, and that his death did what it was intended to do, pay for our sins. The works, then, reveal the person. Jesus was not simply a good man, a prophet, an excellent teacher. He was God in the flesh. Or as Paul says, he is the Lord. By this word Paul does not simply mean that he is master, but that he is the LORD, the Holy One of Israel. If Jesus is not the Son of God, then his death could not save anyone, and it would certainly be wrong to worship him. But if indeed he is the "Lord Jesus," then he is to be worshiped and praised throughout all eternity.

To believe in the Lord Jesus means to commit your life to the one whom you believe is your Savior and your God, trusting that he has forgiven your sins and will receive you in glory. (Christian Leadership Center)

#### Acts 16:32 And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house.

- **they** : Ac 10:33-43 Mk 16:15 Eph 3:8 Col 1:27,28 1Th 2:8 1Ti 1:13-16
- **all** : Ro 1:14,16
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

### THEY SPOKE THE GOSPEL

**They spoke the Word of the Lord** - This is why the jailer's household was saved. Sinners must be presented with the Gospel of God in order to respond and believe and be saved. It is not our articulate, eloquent, flawless presentation that saves anyone! And that is GREAT NEWS, because most of us are not oratorically gifted! Praise God that He takes the pressure off, so to speak. Listen to Paul's description...

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the **power** ([dunamis](#)) of God for salvation to everyone who believes ([pisteuo](#)), to the Jew first and also to the Greek. (Ro 1:16+)

Do you see why this statement about the "Good News" is such great news for those of us (most of us) who are shy and may feel we cannot make a perfect "polished" presentation? Notice the key phrase "IT IS THE POWER OF GOD," not the power of your presentation. God's **power** is His [dunamis](#) which means His inherent ability to accomplish supernaturally that which cannot be accomplished naturally! There it is -- the pressure is off. It is God's power which is present in the Gospel. Now, not that you get a complete pass, because you still must speak (and hopefully the way you have lived opens the door to speak) the simple story of the good news, that we are all sinners, all falling short of God's perfect standard, but Jesus took care of that by dying on the Cross, being buried in a grave and being resurrected from death, and He did this for all sinners who will believe in Him. There it is in a nutshell. So your part is to "set the table" and not try to convince or convict them (that's the Spirit's business - Jn 16:8). They will either chose to pull up a chair, sit down and "eat" the Gospel plate you have set before them or they will refuse. That is on them, not on you. Just set the table with the simple, yet profound Good News and invite them to "eat."

As stated earlier no one becomes a saint (a believer) by proxy, by water baptism, by membership in a specific church or by virtue of their parent's belief in Christ. Each person must personally believe in Christ and His good news of salvation by grace through faith.

**Brian Bell** - A heart must be penetrated by God! A heart may be as thin as an egg shell, like the Philippian business woman Lydia; A heart may have a black veil over it, like the Philippian slave girl; A heart may be thick & needs an great earthquake to crack it, like the Philippian prison guard; But a heart must be penetrated by God!

**George MacDonald** - God has a thousand keys to open a thousand different doors in order to deliver His own.

**Robertson** - So Paul and Silas gave fuller exposition of the way of life to the jailor "with all that were in his house." It was a remarkable service with keenest attention and interest, the jailor with his warden, slaves, and family.

**NET Note** - The **word of the Lord** is a technical expression in OT literature, often referring to a divine prophetic utterance (e.g., Gen 15:1, Isa 1:10, Jonah 1:1). In the NT it occurs 15 times: 3 times as *rhēma tou kuriou*; Luke 22:61, Acts 11:16, 1 Pet 1:25) and 12 times as *logos tou kuriou*; here and in Acts 8:25; 13:44, 48, 49; 15:35, 36; 19:10, 20; 1 Thess 1:8, 4:15; 2 Thess 3:1. As in the OT, this phrase focuses on the prophetic nature and divine origin of what has been said.

This phrase **word of the Lord** occurs 257x in 255v in the Old and New Testaments -

Gen. 15:1; Gen. 15:4; Exod. 9:20; Exod. 9:21; Num. 3:16; Num. 15:31; Num. 36:5; Deut. 5:5; Deut. 34:5; Jos. 8:8; Jos. 8:27; 1 Sam. 3:7; 1 Sam. 3:21; 1 Sam. 15:10; 1 Sam. 15:23; 1 Sam. 15:26; 2 Sam. 7:4; 2 Sam. 12:9; 2 Sam. 22:31; 2 Sam. 24:11; 1 Ki. 2:27; 1 Ki. 6:11; 1 Ki. 12:24; 1 Ki. 13:1; 1 Ki. 13:2; 1 Ki. 13:5; 1 Ki. 13:9; 1 Ki. 13:17; 1 Ki. 13:18; 1 Ki. 13:20; 1 Ki. 13:26; 1 Ki. 13:32; 1 Ki. 14:18; 1 Ki. 15:29; 1 Ki. 16:1; 1 Ki. 16:7; 1 Ki. 16:12; 1 Ki. 16:34; 1 Ki. 17:2; 1 Ki. 17:5; 1 Ki. 17:8; 1 Ki. 17:16; 1 Ki. 17:24; 1 Ki. 18:1; 1 Ki. 18:31; 1 Ki. 19:9; 1 Ki. 20:35; 1 Ki. 21:17; 1 Ki. 21:28; 1 Ki. 22:5; 1 Ki. 22:19; 1 Ki. 22:38; 2 Ki. 1:17; 2 Ki. 3:12; 2 Ki. 4:44; 2 Ki. 7:1; 2 Ki. 7:16; 2 Ki. 9:26; 2 Ki. 9:36; 2 Ki. 10:10; 2 Ki. 10:17; 2 Ki. 14:25; 2 Ki. 15:12; 2 Ki. 20:4; 2 Ki. 20:16; 2 Ki. 20:19; 2 Ki. 23:16; 2 Ki. 24:2; 1 Chr. 10:13; 1 Chr. 11:3; 1 Chr. 11:10; 1 Chr. 12:23; 1 Chr. 15:15; 1 Chr. 22:8; 2 Chr. 11:2; 2 Chr. 12:7; 2 Chr. 18:4; 2 Chr. 18:18; 2 Chr. 30:12; 2 Chr. 34:21; 2 Chr. 35:6; 2 Chr. 36:21; 2 Chr. 36:22; Ezr. 1:1; Ps. 18:30; Ps. 33:4; Ps. 33:6; Ps. 105:19; Isa. 1:10; Isa. 2:3; Isa. 28:13; Isa. 28:14; Isa. 38:4; Isa. 39:5; Isa. 39:8; Isa. 66:5; Jer. 1:2; Jer. 1:4; Jer. 1:11; Jer. 1:13; Jer. 2:1; Jer. 2:4; Jer. 2:31; Jer. 6:10; Jer. 7:2; Jer. 8:9; Jer. 9:20; Jer. 13:2; Jer. 13:3; Jer. 13:8; Jer. 14:1; Jer. 16:1; Jer. 17:15; Jer. 17:20; Jer. 18:5; Jer. 19:3; Jer. 20:8; Jer. 21:11; Jer. 22:2; Jer. 22:29; Jer. 24:4; Jer. 25:3; Jer. 27:18; Jer. 28:12; Jer. 29:20; Jer. 29:30; Jer. 31:10; Jer. 32:6; Jer. 32:8; Jer. 32:26; Jer. 33:1; Jer. 33:19; Jer. 33:23; Jer. 34:4; Jer. 34:12; Jer. 35:12; Jer. 36:27; Jer. 37:6; Jer. 39:15; Jer. 42:7; Jer. 42:15; Jer. 43:8; Jer. 44:24; Jer. 44:26; Jer. 46:1; Jer. 47:1; Jer. 49:34; Ezek. 1:3; Ezek. 3:16; Ezek. 6:1; Ezek. 6:3; Ezek. 7:1; Ezek. 11:14; Ezek. 12:1; Ezek. 12:8; Ezek. 12:17; Ezek. 12:21; Ezek. 12:26; Ezek. 13:1; Ezek. 13:2; Ezek. 14:2; Ezek. 14:12; Ezek. 15:1; Ezek. 16:1; Ezek. 16:35; Ezek. 17:1; Ezek. 17:11; Ezek. 18:1; Ezek. 20:2; Ezek. 20:45; Ezek. 20:47; Ezek. 21:1; Ezek. 21:8; Ezek. 21:18; Ezek. 22:1; Ezek. 22:17; Ezek. 22:23; Ezek. 23:1; Ezek. 24:1; Ezek. 24:15; Ezek. 24:20; Ezek. 25:1; Ezek. 25:3; Ezek. 26:1; Ezek. 27:1; Ezek. 28:1; Ezek. 28:11; Ezek. 28:20; Ezek. 29:1; Ezek. 29:17; Ezek. 30:1; Ezek. 30:20; Ezek. 31:1; Ezek. 32:1; Ezek. 32:17; Ezek. 33:1; Ezek. 33:23; Ezek. 34:1; Ezek. 34:7; Ezek. 34:9; Ezek. 35:1; Ezek. 36:1; Ezek. 36:4; Ezek. 36:16; Ezek. 37:4; Ezek. 37:15; Ezek. 38:1; Dan. 9:2; Hos. 1:1; Hos. 4:1; Joel 1:1; Amos 7:16; Amos 8:12; Jon. 1:1; Jon. 3:1; Jon. 3:3; Mic. 1:1; Mic. 4:2; Zeph. 1:1; Zeph. 2:5; Hag. 1:1; Hag. 1:3; Hag. 2:1; Hag. 2:10; Hag. 2:20; Zech. 1:1; Zech. 1:7; Zech. 4:6; Zech. 4:8; Zech. 6:9; Zech. 7:1; Zech. 7:4; Zech. 7:8; Zech. 8:1; Zech. 8:18; Zech. 9:1; Zech. 11:11; Zech. 12:1; Mal. 1:1; Lk. 22:61; Acts 8:25; Acts 11:16; Acts 12:24; Acts 13:44; Acts 13:48; Acts 13:49; Acts 15:35; Acts 15:36; Acts 16:32; Acts 19:10; Acts 19:20; 1 Thess. 1:8; 1 Thess. 4:15; 2 Thess. 3:1; 1 Pet. 1:25

**Acts 16:33 The jailer took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household**

- **washed** : Ac 16:23 Pr 16:7 Isa 11:6-9 Mt 25:35-40 Lu 10:33,34 Ga 5:6,13
- **and he was baptized** : Ac 16:15 Lu 19:9 1Co 1:16
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## **BRINGING FORTH FRUIT IN KEEPING WITH REPENTANCE**

This is the "about face" supernatural turnaround that one sees when a person is genuinely converted and has a true change in lifestyle. The change in the attitude of the jailer is clearly manifest in washing the wounds of these two prisoners for they were now his brothers in Christ, not his enemies.

**Jack Arnold** - Before his conversion, he was hardened to Paul and Silas; he cared nothing for their pain and suffering. Now as a true Christian, he took them and cared for their wounds and fed them. The person of Christ softened, tenderized and made gentle this hardened, worldly sinner. He was showing love for his Christian brethren. Only Jesus Christ can radically change a man's life like this. The way we know the jailer was truly saved is that good works flowed from his life. ([sermon](#))

**Wiersbe** - One of the evidences of true repentance is a loving desire to make restitution and reparation wherever we have hurt others. We should not only wash one another's feet (John 13:14-15), but we should also cleanse the wounds we have given to others." (Bible Exposition Commentary – Be Daring).

If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you. (John 13:14-15)

**Chrysostom** - He washed and was washed, he washed them from their stripes, and was himself washed from his sins ([Homilies on Acts 36](#)).

Compare - "by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit" - Titus 3:5+

Isa 1:16+ = "Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil."

Isa 1:18+ = "Come now, and let us reason together," Says the LORD, "Though your sins are as scarlet, They will be as white as snow; Though they are red like crimson, They will be like wool."

**Washed their wounds** - what the jailer did to remove the stains left by the rods of the lictors.

**Immediately he was baptized** - Remember this must have been sometime between midnight and daylight! One wonders how many people have so desired to identify with Christ that they sought baptism irregardless of the hour or circumstances? How long did it take for you to be baptized after you were born again? Have you ever been baptized? Are you born again? If you are you should seek to be baptized as a public testimony to the goodness and grace of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to save your soul!

And so they were baptized just like Lydia and her household (Acts 16:15) and just like those men and women who responded to Phillip's proclamation of the Gospel...

But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike. (Acts 8:12+)

**Wiersbe** poses an interesting question - What about the other prisoners? Luke doesn't give us the details, but it is possible that some of them were also born again through the witness of Paul and Silas and the jailer. Some of these prisoners may have been waiting for execution, so imagine their joy at hearing a message of salvation! Paul and Silas thought nothing of their own pains as they rejoiced in what God did in that Philippian jail! No doubt the jailer later joined with Lydia in the assembly.

**Adrian Rogers** - Right away he and all his family were baptized. Acts 16:33 - The great ingathering of souls recorded on the Day of Pentecost in Acts 2 affirms that a person must first receive the word of the gospel, and then be baptized. Those of Cornelius's house in Acts 10 followed the same procedure: they first received the Holy Spirit, and then they were baptized. In Acts 16, Paul and Silas said to the Philippian jailer, "Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved" (Acts 16:31). That same hour of the night, he and his family were baptized. First he heard the word of the Lord, believed on Jesus, and then was baptized. This is the biblical order. (What Every Christian Ought to Know)

**Larkin** - The jailer and his household are the quintessential converts. They come to faith through hearing the Word, confess that faith in baptism, experience the eschatological joy of their new vertical relationship, and live out their new life of grace through physical help and hospitality in their horizontal relationship ([Acts 16:11-40 Witness at Philippi](#))

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## Paul Apple - Four Fruits of Faith

(1) (Acts 16:33a) Ministry of Compassion "And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds," fruit of repentance – testifying that it had been wrong for them to have been beaten and now he was going to do what he could to make it right Start serving the Lord immediately; do what you can do from a changed heart

(2) (Acts 16:33b) Discipleship of Obedience "and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household." Issue of Infant Baptism – this passage is pointed to frequently for support – but actually it clearly emphasizes believer baptism throughout: If you believe, you will be saved; if any in your household believe, they also will be saved - Word of God spoken to all of them – doubt that infants would have much comprehension - They all believed - They all were baptized - They all ate together and rejoiced greatly

Cole: Baptism is the way to confess that you have trusted in Christ. It is an act of obedience to Jesus Christ, showing that He has cleansed you from sin and that you are identified with Him in His death, burial, and resurrection. It signifies a break from your former life of sin, and a commitment to follow Jesus as your Lord. c.

(3) (Acts 16:34a) Fellowship/Hospitality with the Saints "And he brought them into his house and set food before them," Food and fellowship always linked closely together Bock: Now that they are no longer in prison, God has brought about a different kind of connection between them. Those who were enemies and separated are immediately brought together. Thus the scene also illustrates the reconciliation that the gospel brings at the human level.

(4) (Acts 16:34b) Abundant Joy "and rejoiced greatly, Joy should characterize our lives as believers – not moaning and groaning on Monday like the world Quite a dramatic change in temperament – had been suicidal earlier – not rejoicing greatly

**Acts 16:34 And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household.**

- when : Lu 5:29 19:6 Php 4:17 1Th 4:9,10 Philemon 1:7 Jas 2:14-17 1Jn 3:18
- **and rejoiced** : Acts 16:27-29 Acts 2:46 Acts 8:39 Isa 12:1-3 55:12 Isa 57:17,18 Isa 58:7-11 Isa 61:10 Lu 15:22-25,32 Ro 5:2,11 Ro 15:13 Ga 5:22 Php 4:4 1Pe 1:6-8
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

CSB He brought them **up** into his house, set a meal before them, and rejoiced because he had believed God with his entire household. (Act 16:34 CSB)

### GENUINE SALVATION BRINGS SPIRIT STIMULATED JOY

Paul later described a similar response in the new converts at Thessalonica writing that

You also became imitators of us (Paul, Silas, Timothy - 1 Th 1:1) and of the Lord, having received the word in much tribulation with the **joy of the Holy Spirit**, (1 Th 1:6+)

Earlier in Acts we read

When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; and the eunuch no longer saw him, but went on his way **rejoicing**. (Acts 8:39+ context Acts 8:30-38)

In Romans Paul writes

Now may the God of hope fill you with all **joy** and peace in **believing**, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. (Ro 15:13+)

**Robertson** on **brought them into** (up) says this suggests his house may have been "above the prison. The baptism apparently took place in the pool or tank in which he bathed Paul and Silas (De Wette) or the rectangular basin (impluvium) in the court for receiving the rain or even in a swimming pool or bath (kolumbēthra) found within the walls of the prison (Kuinoel). Meyer: "Perhaps the water was in the court of the house; and the baptism was that of immersion, which formed an essential part of the symbolism of the act."

**The jailer rejoiced greatly** - The very one who moments before was on the verge of committing suicide, was now rejoicing in his new found faith (and that of his family) in the living God.

**Rejoiced** (Jumped for joy) (21) (**agalliao** from **agan** = much + **hallomai** = jump; gush, leap, spring up) means literally to "jump much", "leap for joy", skip and jump with happy excitement and so to be exceedingly joyful, overjoyed or exuberantly happy. The idea is this person shows their excessive, ecstatic joy by leaping and skipping. It describes jubilant exultation, a quality of joy that remains unhindered and unchanged by what happens. As discussed below in the NT, **agalliao** describes an exceeding joy (independent of dire circumstances) which is initiated and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

**Barclay** writes that **agalliao** "is the joy which leaps for joy. As it has been put, it is the joy of the climber who has reached the summit, and who leaps for joy that the mountain path is conquered." ([Daily Study Bible](#))

**NET Note** - All his family. It was often the case in the ancient world that conversion of the father led to the conversion of all those in

the household.

**MacArthur** adds - All of his family, servants, and guests who could comprehend the gospel and believe heard the gospel and believed. This does not include infants.

**Robertson** - The whole household (family, warden, slaves) heard the word of God, believed in the Lord Jesus, made confession, were baptized, and rejoiced. Furneaux considers the haste in baptism here "precipitate" as in the baptism of the eunuch. But why delay?

**Wiersbe** - Prayer and praise are powerful weapons (2 Chr 20:1–22; Acts 4:23–37). God responded by shaking the foundations of the prison, opening all the doors, and loosening the prisoners' bonds. They could have fled to freedom, but instead they remained right where they were. For one thing, Paul immediately took command; and, no doubt, the fear of God was on these pagan men. The prisoners must have realized that there was something very special about those two Jewish preachers!

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### Acts 16:25-34 A Forgiving Spirit By David C. Egner

Pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you. —Matthew 5:44.

During the war in Kosovo in 1999, three Americans were captured and held hostage for more than a month. After intense negotiations, a breakthrough occurred and the prisoners were allowed to go free.

Roy Lloyd was part of the delegation that secured their release. He reported, "Each of the three young soldiers was very religious. One of them, Christopher Stone, would not leave until he was allowed to go back to the soldier who served as his guard and pray for him."

Here was a young man who knew something about the principles of Jesus. He could have resented his circumstances and hated his captors. He could have developed a bitter, vengeful spirit. He could have carried a burning rage out of that difficulty. But following the command of Jesus (Matthew 5:44) and the example of Paul and Silas in Philippi (Acts 16:25-34), he forgave his captor and ministered to him.

In a world where retaliation is common, believers are called to be different. We are to pray for our persecutors, forgive them, and minister to them.

Jesus' principles for His followers are challenging, but with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us we can choose to have a forgiving spirit. ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. — Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

For Further Study

Why should we forgive? (Matthew 6:14-15).

Whom should we forgive? (Luke 17:3-4).

How can we forgive? (Galatians 5:22-25).

We are never more Christlike than when we choose to forgive

**Acts 16:35 Now when day came, the chief magistrates sent their policemen, saying, "Release those men."**

- Ac 4:21 5:40 Ps 76:10 Jer 5:22
- Sir William Ramsay - [Acts 16:35 \(St Paul the Traveller and Roman Citizen\)](#)
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## MAGISTRATE'S CHANGE OF HEART

**Now when day came, the chief magistrates sent their policemen, saying, "Release those men."** -Why the change? Were they shaken out of their beds the previous night? Did they see it as an "omen" (pagans were very superstitious)? The jailer may have put in a good word for them? We simply do not know why they had a change of heart.

**Magistrates** (captains, officials) ([4755](#)) see discussion of [strategos](#)

**Policemen** ([4465](#))(**rhabdouchos** from **rhábdos** = a rod + **écho** = to have) is literally a "rod-holder," and thus an officer who attended to the magistrates of Roman cities and colonies and executed their decrees. **Zodhiates** adds that "It is said that they

carried on their shoulders what they called the Roman **fascēs** (i.e., bundles of rods with an axe in the middle of them) as the ensigns and instruments of their office (Acts 16:35, 38 = only 2 uses of this word). They administered punishment by scourging or beheading." **NET Note** adds that "The term was used of the Roman lictor and roughly corresponds to contemporary English "constable, policeman." **Robertson** - **Fascēs-bearers**, regular Greek word (rhabdos, echō) for Latin **lictores**

**Vincens** or **policemen** - Lit., those who hold the rod. The Roman **lictores**. They were the attendants of the chief Roman magistrates.

"Ho, trumpets, sound a war-note!  
Ho, lictors, clear the way!  
The knights will ride, in all their pride,  
Along the streets to day."

MACAULAY, Lays of Ancient Rome.

**Release** (**arist imperative** - do not delay)(630)(**apoluo** from **apó** = marker of dissociation, implying a rupture from a former association, separation + **luo** = loose) is used often of sending a person or a group away from someone (Mt 14:15, 22, 23, 32, etc). **Apoluo** as here often had the sense of to let loose from or to release (as from under arrest or from another's custody), as also in Acts 17:9+. To let go free or set at liberty. **Apoluo** is used in all four Gospels describing the **release** of Barabbas instead of Jesus (Jn 18:39, Mt 27:15, 17, 21, etc)

All of Luke's uses of **apoluo** in Acts -

Acts 3:13; Acts 4:21; Acts 4:23; Acts 5:40; Acts 13:3; Acts 15:30; Acts 15:33; Acts 16:35; Acts 16:36; Acts 17:9; Acts 19:41; Acts 23:22; Acts 26:32; Acts 28:18; Acts 28:25;

**Acts 16:36 And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The chief magistrates have sent to release you. Therefore come out now and go in peace."**

- go : Ac 15:33 Ex 4:18 Jud 18:6 1Sa 1:17 20:42 25:35 29:7 2Ki 5:19 Mk 5:34 Joh 14:27
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## GO IN PEACE (JUST LEAVE!)

**And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The chief magistrates have sent to release you** - Luke does not explain why their "sudden change of heart!"

**Therefore come out now and Go in peace** - **Go** is a command in the present imperative ("Go and keep on going!") Hypocrites (what they really mean was "Just leave!") who now feared they themselves might be punished!

**Peace** (1515)(**eirene** from verb **eiro** = to join or bind together that which has been separated) literally pictures the binding or joining together again of that which had been separated or divided and thus setting at one again, a meaning conveyed by the common expression of one "having it all together". It follows that **peace** is the opposite of division or dissension. **Peace** as a state of concord and harmony is the opposite of war. **Peace** was used as a greeting or farewell corresponding to the Hebrew word **shalom** - "peace to you" but in this context was undoubtedly not sincere. In fact the chief magistrates wanted them to leave so the magistrates could then experience "peace!"

**Acts 16:37 But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out."**

- They have : Ac 16:20-24 22:25-28 Ps 58:1,2 82:1,2 94:20 Pr 28:1
- let : Da 3:25,26 6:18,19 Mt 10:16
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## PAUL REFUSES OFFER OF RELEASE

**But** - [term of contrast](#)

**Paul said to them** - "The lictors by the jailor. The reply of Paul is a marvel of brevity and energy, almost every word has a separate indictment showing the utter illegality of the whole proceeding. (beaten, Roman citizens, without trial)" (Robertson)

**They have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans** -Paul was born a Roman citizen (Acts 22:28), which gave him certain rights, including a public hearing. Scourging of any Roman citizen was prohibited by law; the rights of Paul and Silas, therefore, had already been violated. "he praetors (magistrates) did not know, of course, that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens any more than Lysias knew it in Acts 22:27. Paul's claim is not challenged in either instance. It was a capital offence to make a false claim to Roman citizenship." (Robertson)

**John Stott** notes that "The citizen had only to say [civis Romanus sum](#) and he would be immune to punishment; heavy penalties were prescribed for those who violated these citizenship privileges."

**John MacArthur** wrote, "For Paul and Silas to have departed quietly could have set a dangerous precedent for the future treatment of missionaries and exposed the believers to arbitrary and abusive action from the magistrates."

**Have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly?** -Robertson explains - The [Lex Valeria](#) B.C. 509 and the [Lex Poscia](#) B.C. 248 made it a crime to inflict blows on a Roman citizen. Cicero says, "To fetter a Roman citizen was a crime, to scourge him a scandal, to slay him—parricide." Claudius had "deprived the city of Rhodes of its freedom for having crucified some citizen of Rome" (Rackham).

**Vincent** - Hackett remarks that "almost every word in this reply contains a distinct allegation. It would be difficult to find or frame a sentence superior to it in point of energetic brevity." Cicero in his oration against Verres relates that there was a Roman citizen scourged at Messina; and that in the midst of the noise of the rods, nothing was heard from him but the words, "I am a Roman citizen." He says: "It is a dreadful deed to bind a Roman citizen; it is a crime to scourge him; it is almost parricide to put him to death."

**Wiersbe** offers an excellent thought on why Paul did not wish to leave Philippi secretly writing - Paul, however, was unwilling to sneak out of town, for that kind of exit would have left the new church under a cloud of suspicion. People would have asked, "Who were those men Were they guilty of some crime? Why did they leave so quickly? What do their followers believe?" Paul and his associates wanted to leave behind a strong witness of their own integrity as well as a good testimony for the infant church in Philippi. It was then that Paul made use of his Roman citizenship and boldly challenged the officials on the legality of their treatment. This was not personal revenge but a desire to give protection and respect for the church. ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor](#))

**MacArthur** - To inflict corporal punishment on a Roman citizen was a serious crime, and made more so since Paul and Silas did not receive a trial. As a result, the magistrates faced the possibility of being removed from office, and having Philippi's privileges as a Roman colony revoked

**No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out.** - **NET Note** - They themselves must come and escort us out! Paul was asking for the injustice he and Silas suffered to be symbolically righted. It was a way of publicly taking their actions off the record and showing the apostles' innocence, a major public statement. Note the apology given in v. 39.

**Larkin** - Paul announces his Roman citizenship and declares that two of his fundamental rights have been violated by the previous day's proceedings (Acts 16:22-23). The [Lex Valeria](#) (509 B.C.) and the [Lex Porcia](#) (248 B.C.), reaffirmed in the [Lex Julia](#) (23 B.C.), shielded Roman citizens from humiliating punishments in public, such as beating with rods (Cicero *On Behalf of Rabirius Charged with High Treason* 12; Bruce 1990:366). Further, a Roman citizen was always entitled to a trial before punishment was administered. Paul demands that the magistrates come and publicly escort them from prison. This will be a public admission that the magistrates were wrong and that Christians pose no threat to Roman law...In theory he could travel anywhere without problems, being everywhere protected by the Roman law. He was not subjected to the local law unless he consented (though such consent would be usual in business), and he could take matters into his own courts when these were sitting. He owed allegiance to Rome and Rome would protect him" ([Acts 16:11-40 Witness at Philippi](#))

**Acts 16:38 The policemen reported these words to the chief magistrates. They were afraid when they heard that they were Romans,**

- **they** : Acts 22:29 Mt 14:5 Mt 21:46
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries



## JUSTICE NOW FEARED BY THE UNJUST JUDGES

This passage recalls Paul's exhortation in Romans 12 because they could have taken revenge but Spirit led men that they were, they did not chose the "natural" or expected response...

Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "VENGEANCE IS MINE, I WILL REPAY," says the Lord. (Ro 12:19+)

In the case of the **chief magistrates**, it was their mortal fear for their of Roman vengeance regarding their own mortality!

**The policemen reported these words to the chief magistrates** - What things? Paul's declaration of Roman citizenship, beatings and imprisonment without trial.

**They were afraid when they heard that they were Romans** - Upon learning of Paul's Roman citizenship, the **chief magistrates** were filled with fear, because it was a grave offense to treat Roman citizens as Paul and Silas had been treated.

We see a similar scenario in Acts 22

Therefore those who were about to examine him immediately let go of him; and the (ROMAN) **commander also was afraid** when he found out that he was a Roman, and because he had put him in chains. (Acts 22:29+)

**They are Romans** - Paul's father in Tarsus evidently had been awarded Roman citizenship for services to the state, so Paul (and presumably Silas) had been born with such citizenship. Roman citizenship carried with it many privileges and protections established by Roman law.

**NET Note** - Roman citizens. This fact was disturbing to the officials because due process was a right for a Roman citizen, well established in Roman law. To flog a Roman citizen was considered an abomination. Such punishment was reserved for noncitizens.

An interesting question at this juncture is how did Paul and Silas prove their Roman citizenship? Luke is silent on this but the magistrates clearly are convinced.

**Williams** offers two possible explanations writing - They may each have carried a copy of his professio or registration of birth, in which his Roman status would have been recorded. These were convenient in size... To claim Roman citizenship falsely was punishable by death.

**Larkin** - Paul's innocence of the charges establishes the pattern that Christians are not to be troublemakers; when we do suffer at the hands of state power, it should be as innocent victims of those with questionable motives (compare 1 Pet 4:15-16). Only by such exemplary lives can we witness with integrity and, by the Spirit's power, answer the haunting question of that age or any age: What must I do to be saved? ([Acts 16:11-40 Witness at Philippi](#))

**Acts 16:39 and they came and appealed to them, and when they had brought them out, they kept begging them to leave the city.**

- **and they came:** Ex 11:8 Isa 45:14 49:23 60:14 Mic 7:9,10 Rev 3:9
- **when they had brought them out:** Da 6:16,23
- **they kept begging them to leave the city :** Mt 8:34 Mk 5:17
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

NET and came and apologized to them. After they brought them out, they **asked them repeatedly** to leave the city.

## MAGISTRATES RESPOND TO PAUL'S "INVITATION"

**And they came and appealed to them** - Why? Because Roman law said to punish a Roman citizen without a fair trial was tantamount to death. They knew they were in "hot water" and wanted out! They are seeking to save their reputations, their jobs, even their lives!

**Albert Barnes** wrote, "This was a most humiliating act for Roman magistrates (TO COME TO PAUL AND SILAS), but in this case it was unavoidable. The apostles had them completely in their power, and could easily effect their disgrace and ruin."

**Robertson** - They became frightened for their own lives when they saw what they had done to Roman citizens

**And when they had brought them out, they kept begging them to leave the city**- The magistrates are now like frightened dogs with their tails between their legs so to speak! The [imperfect tense](#) pictures the magistrates asking Paul and Silas again and again to leave town! The [tables are definitely turned](#)! Paul and Silas are in the "[driver's seat](#)."

**Robertson** - They **kept** on **begging** them to leave for fear of further trouble. The colonists in Philippi would turn against the praetors if they learned the facts, proud as they were of being citizens. This verb ([erotao](#)) in the Koiné is often used as here to make a request and not just to ask a question.

**Kept begging** (requesting) (2065)([erotao](#) from [éromai](#) = ask, inquire) means to ask for, usually with implication of an underlying question. The verb does not carry the note of an authoritative command but rather that of a friend making an urgent appeal to a friend. The term suggests that those making the request stand in a position of familiarity with those being treated. Indeed these chief magistrates were all "too familiar" with these two men! And they wanted to be quickly "unfamiliar" with them, so to speak!

**Arnold** makes an interesting statement that could be true albeit not clearly substantiated by Luke - Paul demanded a public apology from the magistrates because he was a Roman citizen. But more importantly, Paul went to all this trouble to protect the young church in Philippi from further physical persecution. Paul used leverage against these magistrates, indicating if they would not persecute the Christians at Philippi, he would not tell the Roman authorities about the bad treatment of Silas and him as Roman citizens.

**Homer Kent** adds that "They had been illegally treated, without even an opportunity to claim their Roman citizenship previously. By insisting upon a dignified exit and the personal presence of the magistrates, they doubtless secured a measure of protection for the Philippian believers who might otherwise have suffered continued persecution."

**Jack Andrews** points out that "The government officials were telling the men of God that they were not welcome in their city! That sounds like cities and towns all over America. God is not welcomed or wanted in many places. He has been ushered out of the schools. He has been put out of the government. He has been laughed at and mocked in our universities. He has been put to the side in our homes!" (Jack Andrews Expository Studies – Understanding Acts)

**Acts 16:40 They went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia, and when they saw the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.**

- **and entered** : Ac 16:14 4:23 12:12-17
- **they encouraged them**: Ac 14:22 2Co 1:3-7 4:8-12,16-18 1Th 3:2,3
- Acts 16 Resources - Multiple Sermons and Commentaries

## FELLOWSHIP AND HOSPITALITY WITH THE SAINTS

**They went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia**- The went to the church at Lydia's house. Note that Luke here resumes the third person, implying that he did not accompany them. We don't see him again until Acts 20:5+ where Luke records "they were waiting for **US** at Troas."

**Robertson** - Paul and Silas, but not Luke and Timothy. Note "**they**" here, not "we." The movements of Timothy are not perfectly clear till he reappears at Berea (Acts 17:15). It seems unlikely that he came to Thessalonica with Paul and Silas since only Paul and Silas obtained security there (Acts 17:9) and were sent on to Berea (Acts 17:10). Probably Timothy was sent to Thessalonica from Philippi with gifts of which Paul spoke later (Php 4:15f.). Then he followed Paul and Silas to Berea.

**Paul** made it a practice to encourage the church as he had in Acts 15

Judas and Silas, also being prophets themselves, encouraged and strengthened the brethren with a lengthy message. (Acts 15:32)

**Jack Andrews** - Thank God for those who long to come together with the brethren! Do we long to see the brethren? Do we long to fellowship? Do we long to worship our Lord together and serve our Lord together? The modern day church puts God on the clock! If we go past 12 o'clock people get upset! They voice their displeasure—it is going too long! Why is it that we can go to a ball game for

three hours, watch a movie for two and a half hours, go shopping for six hours, play video games for untold hours and we are alright with that? The church that does not love to meet together is in desperate need of revival! Did you know that each year in America 2.7 million church members become inactive. Efforts to grow and stabilize churches are constantly being challenged by this continuous exodus. These people, for whatever reason, have chosen to disengage from the local church. (Ibid)

**And when they saw the brethren, they encouraged them and departed** - Paul and Silas had just been beaten and placed in stocks and yet they are the ones who are giving the encouragement. Of course, part of the encouragement may have been the fact that we have been mistreated will probably result in the city officials taking more of a "hands off" attitude on this infant church. We know that there were few Jews in Philippi, so this ever ferocious foe was not likely to give the church much opposition.

**Encouraged** (exhorted, comforted) (3870)(**parakaleo** from **para** = side of, alongside, beside + **kaleo** = call) means literally to call one alongside, to call someone to oneself, to call for, to summon. **Parakaleo** can include the idea of giving help or aid but the primary sense in the NT is to urge someone to take some action, especially some ethical course of action. Sometimes the word means convey the idea of comfort, sometimes of exhortation but always at the root there is the idea of enabling a person to meet some difficult situation with confidence and with gallantry.

**Wiersbe** reviews this chapter writing that "It is also worth noting that not every sinner comes to Christ in exactly the same manner. Timothy was saved partly through the influence of a godly mother and grandmother. Lydia was converted through a quiet conversation with Paul at a Jewish prayer meeting, while the jailer's conversion was dramatic. One minute he was a potential suicide, and the next minute he was a child of God! Different people with different experiences, and yet all of them changed by the grace of God. Others just like them are waiting to be told God's simple plan of salvation. Will you help them hear? In your own witness for Christ, will you be daring? ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary. 1989. Victor](#))

**Guzik** sums up the 2 radically different conversions - Lydia was a churchgoer; the guard was not. Lydia was prospering in business; the guard was about to kill himself. Lydia's heart was gently opened; the guard's heart was violently confronted. The guard had a remarkable sign - an earthquake, but all Lydia had was the move of the Holy Spirit in her heart. Both heard the gospel and believed, and through each of them their whole families were touched!

As **Ironsides** says "So the gospel entered Europe, and we can be thankful that from that day to this the message of grace is still going out in that continent. Although we live on a different continent, we enjoy the message today because it was brought to Europe so long ago." (Ibid)

**Larkin** reminds us "Persecution will not end with Paul and Silas's departure, for that is the Christian's lot..."

Acts 14:22+ strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, **"Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."**

Philippians 1:27-30+ Only conduct yourselves (THE CHURCH AT PHILIPPI WHICH IS BEING PLANTED HERE IN ACTS 16) in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; 28 in no way alarmed by your opponents—which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God. 29 For to you **it has been granted for Christ's sake, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake,** 30 **experiencing the same conflict which you saw in me,** and now hear to be in me.

2 Ti 3:12+ Indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.

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**Jack Arnold** - The supreme question is, **"What must I do to be saved?"** Rationalists would say, "Salvation is a piper's dream and supernaturalism is a fairy tale, so they deny salvation of any kind and have no answer to the supreme question. Liberals and modernists would say that salvation is living the best life one can and then God will accept everyone ultimately, but this reduces Christianity to a works system. Cultists say that salvation is attained by accepting their doctrines which are contrary to the Bible. Papists say that salvation comes when one is water baptized as a child, belonging to the church and acknowledgement of the Pope. Libertines say that Christianity cannot be proven; "therefore, eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die," and don't even think about salvation. Existentialists say, "If you need the salvation kick as a crutch to live, that is fine, but everyone doesn't need it and must be left alone to do their own thing." What does God in the Bible say the ultimate answer is to the supreme question, "What must I do to be saved?" The answer is, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved." Will you believe men or God? Will you trust the Word of God or the word of demons? Trust, commit, lean upon, abandon to the person of Jesus Christ alone for salvation and you shall be saved. ([Sermon](#))

# TIMOTHY

## Greater Men and Women of the Bible

### James Hastings

And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra: and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy.... The same was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium.—Acts 16:1, 2.

AMONG the friends of St. Paul there is no one who appeals more to our interest and sympathies than Timothy. For not only was he associated with the Apostle during a longer period than any of his other companions, but he was evidently regarded with an altogether peculiar affection and esteem. Following the example of the fourth Evangelist, Timothy might have called himself "the disciple whom Paul loved." He shared his spiritual father's outward labours and intimate thoughts. He was with him when the Apostle could not or would not have the companionship of others. He was sent on the most delicate and confidential missions. He had charge of the most important congregations. When the Apostle was in his last and almost lonely imprisonment it was Timothy whom he summoned to console him and receive his last injunctions. All, therefore, that we can learn regarding Timothy is significant for the light it throws upon the character alike of the pupil and of the master.

#### I WITH LOIS AND EUNICE

1. The early home of Timothy was at Lystra, and owing to the general Græcizing tendency of the district, we are not surprised to learn that while his mother was a Jewess, his father was a Greek. We do not, however, know even the latter's name; and as there is no further reference to him in the Acts or the Epistles, it is probable that he died during his son's infancy.

It was to his mother, Eunice, and his grandmother, Lois, that Timothy owed the moulding of his character. St. Paul in his Second Epistle to Timothy speaks with warm appreciation of their faith, and "from a babe" the boy was instructed by them in the sacred writings of the Old Testament. There was never a time in his whole experience when the majestic words, the wonderful cadences, of psalmist and of prophet were unfamiliar to the ear. The Book was no less a part of the growing lad's daily life than the sky above him and the earth beneath his feet. He was in living touch with grace as with nature before the ripening intelligence had learned to harmonize the messages that fell upon the attentive ear. The wistful eyes looked up into the loving face of her who taught, and lo! the words of Scripture on the lips of the believer became, as is their wont, a sacrament of the love of God, and the faith of Eunice, the faith of the aged Lois, passed as through an open door to the heart of their little son.

Happy he  
With such a mother! faith in womankind  
Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high  
Comes easy to him; and tho' he trip and fall,  
He shall not blind his soul with clay.

It was so with Timothy. He had inherited the religious instinct from Eunice, and through her influence he remained true to it.

¶ "We must make up our minds," said Mrs. Booth, "that our children shall not be wicked"; but the misery of to-day is that, in so many cases, it is left to the children to make up their minds, while father and mother look helplessly on. There are mysteries in human character, and sometimes after real care and patience, there are outbursts of passion which baffle all a mother's hope. Temptations, against which nothing could guard, lay hold of some element in a boy's inheritance, and carry him away; but even then the case may not be lost. George Meredith, in one place, says very nobly, "My boy, if he fall, will fall from an actual region of purity. He dare not be a sceptic as to that. Whatever his darkness, he will have the guiding light of a memory behind him; so much is secure."

¶ Lowell's boyhood was spent in an atmosphere of refinement and culture. His father's library of nearly four thousand volumes included, besides theological treatises, an excellent representative selection of literary classics, ancient and modern, and among these he was allowed to browse at his will. This early miscellaneous reading laid the foundations of the remarkably broad and sound scholarship of his later life. It also gave that distinctively bookish bias to his mind which, amid all the distracting crowd of other interests, he never afterwards lost.

2. St. Paul visited Lystra in the course of his first missionary journey. A work of healing which he wrought so impressed the people that they wished to worship him and Barnabas as Zeus and Hermes. But before long St. Paul's bitter enemies pursued him from Antioch and Iconium; they turned the fickle crowd against the Apostles, a riot ensued, and St. Paul was stoned and left for dead. To the surprise, however, of his friends, he quickly recovered, and, as further work in Lystra would be impossible, left on the next day for Derbe. Although no mention is made of them, it seems certain that Eunice and Timothy were converted and baptized during this first

visit, and it is interesting to put together the evidence for this point. In writing his First Epistle to the Corinthians, St. Paul declares that he can address them as “my beloved children.” “For though ye should have ten thousand tutors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I begat you through the gospel.” In other words, he limits the use of “children” to describe those of whom he is the spiritual father, who owe their conversion directly to him. Immediately afterwards he adds: “I have sent unto you Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord.” This seems to imply quite clearly that Timothy also was converted by the Apostle himself. But when did it happen? Not during St. Paul’s second visit to Lystra, for when he arrived Timothy was already a disciple “well reported of by the brethren.” Wherefore the evidence seems to show that the conversion of Timothy and Eunice must have been among the unrecorded events of St. Paul’s first visit to Lystra. Again, it is probable that Timothy was an eye-witness of St. Paul’s stoning in that city. Many years later St. Paul appeals to him by his remembrance of “what things befell me at Antioch, at Iconium, at Lystra”; and indeed the scene would make a lasting impression upon this sensitive youth. In bygone days St. Paul as a youth had witnessed the stoning of Stephen; now he himself was stoned, while another young man, destined also to work nobly in the ministry of the Church, stood by.

¶ One of Millais’ freshest and most delightful pictures is termed “The Boyhood of Sir Walter Raleigh.” An adventurer who has sailed and fought in the Spanish Main is recounting his travels and exploits in the West. The animation in his face and his dramatic action show that he is calling into service the powers of a vivid imagination. His audience is composed of two boys, one of whom is the youthful Raleigh, who has ceased now to listen to the sailor’s romance and is gazing down the “vistas of a dream.” His heart leaps within him, and his youthful fancy conjures up a glowing picture of romance. “He sees El Dorado, and the palaces of the Aztecs and Incas, temples of the Sun where the sun’s face burns in gold, hidden treasures, fair Indian captives, and the fountains of eternal youth.” The call has come to him; the little old-fashioned toy which, before it came, constituted his world, now lies neglected in the corner. In an hour he has grown into youth, and has put childish things away for ever. The end of it all he does not see—the scaffold and the axe—but if he did they would not appal him. He has heard the call, and he must “go out, not knowing whither he goeth.”

3. Timothy was a lad of about fifteen when St. Paul converted him at Lystra, in or near 45 A.D. Seven years later St. Paul, on his second missionary journey, came again to Lystra. He had just passed through the crisis of his separation from Barnabas, and, while Silas served as a faithful travelling-companion, he was not an intimate friend, as Barnabas had been. The Apostle must have regarded it as a direct gift of Providence that, while thus bereaved, he came once more upon Timothy. For he chose him as his comrade, with the result that the loss of Barnabas was felt no longer. The Apostle had lost a brother, but he gained a son. His personal good opinion of Timothy was strengthened by the testimony of those who knew him well—his fellow-Christians in Lystra and Antioch. So “him would Paul have to go forth with him.”

The conduct of the Apostle of the Gentiles on this occasion has sometimes excited surprise. St. Paul, the great proclaimer of the abrogation of the Law by the Gospel, circumcised the young evangelist. The inconsistency is more apparent than real. It was an instance of his becoming “all things to all men” for the salvation of souls, and of his sacrificing his own convictions in matters that were not essential, rather than cause others to offend. Timothy’s father had been a Gentile, and the son, though brought up in his mother’s faith, had never been circumcised. To St. Paul circumcision was a worthless rite. The question was whether it was a harmless one. That depended upon circumstances. If, as among the Galatians, it caused people to rely upon the Law and neglect the Gospel, it was a superstitious obstacle with which no compromise could be made. But if it was a passport whereby preachers who would otherwise be excluded might gain access to Jewish congregations, then it was not only a harmless but a useful ceremony. In the synagogue Timothy as an uncircumcised Jew would have been an intolerable abomination, and would never have obtained a hearing. To free him from this crippling disadvantage, St. Paul subjected him to a rite which he himself knew to be obsolete.

¶ It is respectful to bow to the King of England, it is disrespectful to bow to the King of France; it is the rule to curtsy to the Emperor; and the prostration of the whole body is required by Eastern Monarchs. These are established ceremonies, and must be complied with; but why they were established, I defy sense and reason to tell us. It is the same among all ranks, where certain customs are received, and must necessarily be complied with, though by no means the result of sense and reason. As for instance, the very absurd, though almost universal custom of drinking people’s healths. Can there be any thing in the world less relative to any other man’s health, than my drinking a glass of wine? Common sense, certainly, never pointed it out; but yet common sense tells me I must conform to it. Good sense bids one be civil, and endeavour to please; though nothing but experience and observation can teach one the means, properly adapted to time, place, and persons. This knowledge is the true object of a gentleman’s travelling, if he travels as he ought to do. By frequenting good company in every country, he himself becomes of every country; he is no longer an Englishman, a Frenchman, or an Italian; but he is an European; he adopts, respectively, the best manners of every country; and is a Frenchman at Paris, an Italian at Rome, an Englishman at London.

4. Then followed the ordination, performed with great solemnity by the laying on of the hands of all the elders of the congregation. This we learn, not from the Acts, but from St. Paul’s Epistles to Timothy. The Book of Acts simply says of Timothy, “Him would Paul have to go forth with him.” But then when we turn to the Epistles written to Timothy, we find that it was not as an ordinary companion that Timothy was taken. He went forth as St. Paul himself had gone forth from the Church of Antioch, a duly ordained and publicly

recognized messenger of Christ. Every circumstance of that day lived in the memory of St. Paul; many years later it is by the remembrance of the gift bestowed by the laying on of hands, by the good confession witnessed, by the prayers and prophecies of the assembled Church, that he appeals to Timothy in his letters.

Spirit of Remembrance, come,  
Quickening Spirit, strong and wise,  
Bid the slumbering soul arise,  
Wake to speech the conscience dumb.

Bring to mind the dreams of youth,  
Ere the world our tempter proved;  
Show again the things we loved,  
And the vows we meant in truth.

## II BY THE SIDE OF ST. PAUL

The young evangelist now leaves his home and his mother, and goes forth with Paul and Silas to preach the gospel. The parting from her son would be a sore trial to the widowed Eunice. He had been so much to her: she, stronger tie of love still, had done so much for him. Nor could she shut her eyes to the hardships and perils which now lay before him. But, like Hannah of old, she recognized an even higher call than that of earthly affection: "I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord."

1. The progress of the three missionaries through Asia Minor is traced in Acts 16:4–8, till at Troas they stand on the seashore and look across the Ægean Sea towards Europe; and the vision of the "man of Macedonia" calls them thither. They have now become a party of four, as we find by the word "we" occurring for the first time (verse 10), showing that they had been joined by Luke, the beloved physician, who writes the narrative. But he is with them only a little while. The "we" occurs again at Philippi (verse 16), but after that we find "they" as before. Only Paul and Silas are mentioned by name, but Timothy is with them, as we find a little later; and a passage in the Epistle to the Philippians, written years after, reveals Timothy's presence at Philippi on this first occasion: "I hope ... to send Timothy shortly unto you ... Ye know the proof of him, that, as a child serveth a father, so he served with me in furtherance of the gospel."

At Philippi St. Paul and Silas were imprisoned. At Thessalonica a fierce attack was made upon the house in which the travellers lodged. Their enemies followed them to Berea, whence St. Paul left for Athens. Timothy and Silas remained for a while, but their companionship was much needed by their leader, who sent word that they should come to him with all speed. But no sooner did Timothy arrive than he was sent away again on an important errand. For the first time in his experience as a Christian missionary he was given independent work. The persecution of the Church in Thessalonica had not ceased with St. Paul's departure, and its members were in sore need of encouragement. Of course St. Paul, as his urgent message had shown, longed for the companionship of Timothy in Athens. Yet his spirit of unselfishness triumphed. Hearing of the state of things in Thessalonica, to use his own words, "we could no longer forbear"; "we thought it good to be left behind at Athens alone; and sent Timothy, our brother and God's minister in the gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith; that no man be moved by these afflictions." In this task Timothy was successful, and was able to bring back good news. "But when Timothy came even now"—i.e. immediately before the writing of the First Epistle to the Thessalonians—"unto us from you, and brought us glad tidings of your faith and love ... for this cause, brethren, we were comforted over you."

On his return from Thessalonica Timothy found St. Paul at Corinth. At Corinth, as at Lystra, Iconium, and Philippi, Timothy became prominent for his zeal as an evangelist: and then for about five years we lose sight of him. We may think of him as generally at the side of St. Paul, and as always working with him; but of the details of the work we are ignorant.

Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,  
Man's fitful uproar mingling with his toil,  
Still do thy sleepless ministers move on,  
Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting;  
Still working, blaming still our vain turmoil,  
Labourers that shall not fail, when man is gone.

2. We next meet with Timothy at Ephesus, in that long period of "three years" during which St. Paul worked in that great city. From here he is sent, with a companion, Erastus, into Macedonia, where he would no doubt visit the Churches of Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea. He is also to go on to Corinth. His mission to the last place was evidently a very delicate one, and, fearful of the result, St. Paul bespoke for his envoy a kindly welcome, in a letter in which he explained the object of his coming. "I have sent unto you," so he writes to the Corinthians, "Timothy, who is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord, who shall put you in remembrance of my

ways which be in Christ, even as I teach everywhere in every church." And in a later passage in the same Epistle he earnestly calls upon the Corinthians to respect Timothy's timidity, and to set him forward again on his journey in peace. Timothy was evidently of a shy and sensitive disposition, and St. Paul, whom "anxiety for all the churches" never made forgetful of the courtesies of everyday life, desired that nothing should be done to wound or annoy him. But the appeal, so kindly meant, would seem to have been in vain, if, as many scholars hold, we are to identify Timothy with the wronged sufferer of 2 Cor. 7:12. His mission was not successful; he brought back news which caused St. Paul great anxiety and necessitated a mission of Titus.

When St. Paul wrote 2 Corinthians from Macedonia later in the year, Timothy was again with him, for his name is coupled with St. Paul's; and he was still with him when the Apostle wrote to the Romans from Corinth, for he joined in sending salutations to the Roman Christians.

3. From Corinth Timothy crossed over to Troas, where, along with other brethren, he awaited the arrival of St. Paul, who had been making the longer circuit through Macedonia. But we are left uncertain whether he accompanied the Apostle from thence on his last visit to Jerusalem. We do not know what he was doing during St. Paul's two years' imprisonment at Cæsarea; but he joined him during the first imprisonment at Rome, for the Epistles to the Philippians, the Colossians, and Philemon are written in the names of Paul and Timothy. From certain passages in Philippians we may conjecture that Timothy went to Philippi and returned again before the Apostle was released. At the close of the Epistle to the Hebrews we read, "Know ye that our brother Timothy hath been set at liberty." It is possible that the imprisonment to which this notice refers was contemporaneous with the first imprisonment of St. Paul, and that it is again referred to in 1 Timothy (6:12) as "the good confession" which he confessed "in the sight of many witnesses."

### III ALONE IN EPHEBUS

1. The few additional facts respecting Timothy are given us in the two letters to him. Some time after St. Paul's release the two were together in Ephesus; and when the Apostle went on into Macedonia he left his companion behind him to warn and exhort certain holders of erroneous doctrine to desist from teaching it. There were tears, on the younger friend's side at any rate, to which St. Paul alludes at the opening of the Second Epistle; and they were natural enough. The task imposed upon Timothy was no easy one; and after the dangers and sufferings to which the Apostle had been exposed, and which his increasing infirmities continually augmented, it was only too possible that the friends would never meet again.

2. It is worth while trying to conceive to ourselves the situation at Ephesus, the atmosphere in which Timothy was called upon to discharge his Christian ministry, for the evidence goes to show that his was a nature likely to be keenly sensitive to the conditions under which his work had to be done.

To begin with, Ephesus was the seat of the worship of Diana; her temple was a magnificent building dominating the entire city, and on it wealth and taste had lavished their utmost. Everything was done to attract the eye, to inspire with awe and wonder. Its courts were daily thronged with worshippers from every quarter of the Roman Empire. Perhaps it was under the shadow of the great temple, and in the presence of all this splendid pageantry of worship, that Timothy had to shepherd the flock of Christ, to lead the unadorned worship, and to administer the austere simple ordinances of the primitive Church. It must have required a firm courage, an eye undimmed for spiritual things, for a man with Greek blood in his veins, and trained from childhood to think with reverent delight of the Temple at Jerusalem, to hold on unabashed, and not sometimes to be visited with a sort of undefined wish that in some way or other he might be able to blend together the body of a splendid ritual with the soul of a spiritual Christian service. One can imagine him, not exactly ashamed of Christ, but feeling like a dissenter in a cathedral city. He believes himself to be right, but he wishes that he had not to breathe so much of the chilling air of social contempt. Perhaps his position might find a modern parallel in that of a native Christian teacher, whose work shall lie, say in Benares, the metropolis of Hinduism, if the supposition be added that India were not under British but under native rule.

If this was the condition outside the body of Christian disciples, there were elements at work inside that body with which Timothy had to reckon. Oriental speculation had its chosen home at Ephesus, and the Judaizing tendency, which had been rampant in Galatia, was not wholly absent. These two influences, apparently so diverse, conspired against the simplicity that is in Christ. It was beginning to be a cherished dream with certain minds that a sort of eclectic religion might be developed out of a union of philosophic speculation, Jewish ritualism, and the gospel of Christ. These people did not mean to deny the gospel, but only to enrich it; they would rid it of its barrenness, and, in a non-apostolic sense, adorn the doctrine of God their Saviour.

In addition to these religious, or quasi-religious, elements of Ephesian life, we may be sure that there was, ever present, the abounding licentiousness which distinguished populations in which the Greek and the Oriental mingled; the darker vices of the Asiatic were partly veiled by the flashing splendours of the Greek imagination, and, becoming less repulsive, were the more dangerous.

Timothy seems to have been by nature one to whom opposition would always mean distress and pain, to whom firmness would often be difficult and expensive. He was not a man who, when things seemed to be going against him or getting into confusion,

could shrug his shoulders and refuse to be harassed. Rather, he seems one to whom antagonism, insolence, isolation, would mean sharp suffering; one whose heart might grow sick as he looked at a gathering storm of hostility and danger; one on whose courage and constancy such a storm would break with a severe if not a staggering shock. His was a character deficient somehow in that useful sort of obstinacy which is an element in some men's power of endurance, and stands them in good stead in hard times. The traits of moral beauty on which St. Paul elsewhere lays stress, in speaking of Timothy, are such as might well consist with this deficiency; they are the attractions likeliest to be wrought by the grace of God in such a nature. Eminent unselfishness; the capacity for generous self-devotion; warm-heartedness and loyalty in personal affection; a spiritual sense which made the care for others' welfare seem instinctive;—these are the features which, as we read the First Epistle to the Corinthians and the Epistle to the Philippians, appear to supplement the impression of Timothy's character which we get from the Pastoral Epistles. There is often in such men an unfailing charm of delicacy and gentleness; they seem as though there had been more summer than winter in their lives; while, with some characteristics which may be misnamed effeminate, there is in them a really womanly power of patience and self-sacrifice. Surely, if we may form any such idea of Timothy, we cannot wonder at St. Paul's intense affection for him, as a constant presence of tenderness and sympathy in the midst of much antagonism and disappointment and anxiety. We cannot wonder that St. Paul should have trusted him largely, and believed that he would rightly bear his high charge as Apostolic delegate over the Church of Ephesus; nor yet can we wonder that, as the Apostle thinks of him in the isolation, the perils, the tangled difficulties of his position, as he thinks of the subtlety of error, the restlessness of idle talk, the malignity of moral corruption, the brutality of persecution, all besetting, or likely to beset, that sensitive temperament, a fear should be continually haunting him lest the strain prove too great.

¶ We may say of Newman, as he said of himself, that he had a "morbidly sensitive skin," and this is about as bad an equipment for active life in a world of struggle as nature can bestow. That a pre-eminently sensitive man tastes more keenly than others the choice delights of life is probably true, but it is certain that he suffers a thousand miseries which tougher natures never feel. An acute sensitiveness may be allied with, though it is by no means a synonym for, keen sympathy with the sorrows of others, and so may gather round a man a band of grateful admirers; but it will never disarm an opponent, or turn a foe into a friend. Still less will it enable a man to force his way through clenched antagonisms, or to crush resistance as he marches towards his end. Then again a sensitive nature is

Wax to receive, and marble to retain.

It may forgive, but it cannot forget, slights and injuries, buffets and bruises. Forgetfulness of injuries is the blessed lot of those who have inflicted them.

3. It was to encourage Timothy in his hard task that St. Paul wrote to him the two Epistles. The First Epistle was sent from Macedonia some time after the Apostle had left Ephesus. Fearing that his return may be delayed he writes this letter to press his original charge more solemnly on Timothy, to encourage him in his work, to guide him in his teaching and dealing with various classes in the Church, and to regulate certain points of Church order which needed organization without delay. The Second Epistle was written from Rome when the aged Apostle was imprisoned for the second and last time. In the interval between the letters the sky had darkened. The Neronian persecutions had broken out and the Church was threatened by a new danger. St. Paul knew that his own days were numbered, and in his loneliness his heart went out to the young evangelist who had been to him more than a son.

In both these letters, but especially in the second, St. Paul seems never tired of enforcing, with every sanction, every appeal, every encouragement that he can use, the paramount duty of unflinching steadfastness. Again and again that duty is impressed on his disciple's conscience, that it may be safe from all risks of forgetfulness or surprise: "God hath not given us the spirit of fearfulness"; "Be not thou ashamed"; "Take thy share of hardship"; "Hold fast the form of sound words"; "Be strong in grace"; "Continue, abide in the things which thou hast learned"; "Be instant in season, out of season"; "Watch thou in all things"; "Endure afflictions."

¶ When Luther was in the hall, about to be ushered into the presence of the assembly, a veteran knight, George Freundsberg, commander of the guard, touched him on the shoulder, and said kindly, "My poor monk, my poor monk, thou hast a march and a struggle to go through, such as neither I nor many other captains have seen the like of in our worst campaigns. But if thy cause be just, and thou art sure of it, go forward, in God's name, and fear nothing! He will not forsake thee!" A noble tribute from a brave soldier to the courage of the soul!

4. The authenticity of the Pastoral Epistles has been called in question: Renan, in his bold way, calls the writer of them a forger, who perhaps incorporated some authentic notes of St. Paul in his apocryphal composition; and the school of Baur, as might have been expected, gives them short shrift, rejecting the whole of them. Such criticism can be met on its own ground, but is there not another method? Forgery stumbles, not when it sets itself deliberately to delineate character, but when character is not so much carefully outlined as taken for granted, and made the groundwork (almost invisible) of the superstructure. And if we can discover in these letters a character consistent with itself and with its circumstances, if a score of delicate suggestions make us feel that we are dealing with a living man, who is being dealt with by one stronger than himself, whose words vibrate with the personal element, then



we feel that we have got into that atmosphere in which the mere literary actor and the forger cannot live, and we gain a new evidence that these two letters are rightly entitled the First and the Second Epistles of Paul the Apostle to Timothy.

5. The Second Epistle to Timothy closes with a pressing and repeated entreaty to Timothy to hasten to St. Paul. The aged Apostle was alone, save for the faithful Luke. Demas had forsaken him, Crescens and Titus had been summoned elsewhere. His friends among the Roman Christians were timorous; not one of them had dared to stand by him when he appeared to make his defence in court. Not thus, he knew, would Timothy act. And so he is entreated to come with all speed, and to bring with him Mark, whose former difference with St. Paul was now happily at an end. And then we notice the little personal touches: the homely directions to bring a cloak and some books which St. Paul needed. Perhaps they would give him some comfort in prison, perhaps he wished to give them to his friends to be kept in memory of him after his death. Above all he needs Timothy himself—Timothy, who had wept when last he parted from him. And yet, despite the repeated bidding that he should come at once, St. Paul seems to feel a presentiment that he must arrive too late. Therefore he speaks words of farewell, infinitely tender and pathetic, yet without a trace of weakness, to his “beloved child.”

Whether Timothy was able to comply with St. Paul’s entreaties we have no means of knowing. We like to think of the beloved disciple as comforting the last hours of his master; but, although the conjecture may be a right one, we must remember that it is conjecture and no more.

With the Second Epistle to him ends all that we really know of Timothy. Tradition and ingenious guesswork add a little more, which can be neither proved nor disproved. More than two hundred years after his death, Eusebius tells us that he is related to have held the office of overseer of the diocese of Ephesus; and five centuries later Nicephorus tells us that he was beaten to death by the Ephesian mob for protesting against the licentiousness of their worship of Artemis. It has been conjectured that Timothy may be the “Angel” of the Church of Ephesus, who is partly praised and partly blamed in the Apocalypse, and parallels have been drawn between the words of blame in Rev. 2:4, 5, and the uneasiness which seems to underlie one or two passages in the Second Epistle to Timothy. But the resemblances are too slight to be relied upon. All we can say is that, even if the later date be taken for the Apocalypse, Timothy may have been overseer of the Church of Ephesus at the time when the book was written.

6. In the relation of St. Paul to Timothy we have one of those beautiful friendships between an older and a younger man which are commonly so helpful to both. It is in such cases, rather than where the friends are equal in age, that each can be the real complement of the other. Each by his abundance can supply the other’s want, whereas men of equal age would have common wants and common supplies. In this respect the friendship between St. Paul and Timothy reminds us of that between St. Peter and St. John. In each case the friend who took the lead was much older than the other; and (what is less in harmony with ordinary experience) in each case it was the older friend who had the impulse and the enthusiasm, the younger who had the reflectiveness and the reserve. These latter qualities are perhaps less marked in Timothy than in John, but nevertheless they are there, and they are among the leading traits of his character.

It is difficult to estimate which of the two friends gained most from the affection and devotion of the other. No doubt Timothy’s debt to St. Paul was immense: and which of us would not think himself amply paid for any amount of service and sacrifice, in having the privilege of being chosen friend of such a man as St. Paul? But, on the other hand, few men could have supplied the Apostle’s peculiar needs as Timothy did. That intense craving for sympathy which breathes so strongly throughout the writings of St. Paul found its chief human satisfaction in Timothy. To be alone in a crowd is a trial to most men; and few men have felt the oppressiveness of it more keenly than St. Paul. To have some one, therefore, who loved and revered him, who knew his “ways” and could impress them on others, who cared for those for whom St. Paul cared and was ever willing to minister to them as his friend’s missionary and delegate—all this and much more was inexpressibly comforting to the Apostle. It gave him strength in his weaknesses, hope in his many disappointments, and solid help in his daily burden of “anxiety for all the churches.”

While his other friends were St. Paul’s “brethren in the Lord,” Timothy became to the childless and wifeless Apostle his “beloved son.” We are right, surely, in thinking that not Barnabas, Luke, Apollos, or any other of his companions, was quite so dear to St. Paul, or was admitted so far into his confidence.

The friendship between these two men, so unequal in years and so different in powers, is one of the most suggestive episodes in the early history of the gospel. It was apparently the one mellowing affection that toned down the impassioned vigour of St. Paul; that bound him tenderly to life, and, when he would spring to grasp the heavenly crown, recalled him with a sigh; that mingled a constant human image with his prayers and brought them trembling on his voice; that, homeless as he was, made him feel amid his wanderings, the sadness of absence and of loneliness.

¶ Friendship requires that rare mean betwixt likeness and unlikeness, that piques each with the presence of power and of consent in the other party. Let me be alone to the end of the world, rather than that my friend should overstep, by a word or a look, his real sympathy. I am equally balked by antagonism and by compliance. Let him not cease an instant to be himself. The only joy I have in his being mine, is that the not mine is mine. I hate, where I looked for a manly furtherance, or at least a manly resistance, to find a

mush of concession. Better be a nettle in the side of your friend than his echo. The condition which high friendship demands is ability to do without it. That high office requires great and sublime parts. There must be very two, before there can be very one. Let it be an alliance of two large, formidable natures, mutually beheld, mutually feared, before yet they recognize the deep identity which beneath these disparities unites them.

¶ In the church of San Paolo at Rome a gorgeous baldacchino surmounts the traditional tomb of Paul the Apostle. In immediate juxtaposition with it, in front of the high altar, is a shrine of more modest pretensions, on which is inscribed the one name, which tells its own touching story—

“TIMOTHEI.”

Here the ashes of the Apostle Timothy are said to rest. Strong is the temptation, for once, not too exactly to demand or scrutinise authority for the truth of a legend in itself so beautiful, that these two honoured servants of Christ, who had loved and laboured, wept and prayed, sorrowed and rejoiced together, are now resting side by side, a true “family burying-place,” the father and his “own son in the faith

## CALVINISM VERSUS ARMINIANISM

**Tony Garland** uses this passage to give a discussion comparing Calvinism and Arminianism... [\(click for his full article\)](#)

### 1. Luke informs us that God took the initiative that led to Lydia’s salvation.

#### 2. Where angels fear to tread: Calvinism and Arminianism.

1. An ongoing in-house disagreement among Christians concerning the roles of God and man in salvation.
2. How are we to understand issues of sovereignty, independence, and responsibility—of man in relation to God?
3. Calvinism - based on theological ideas of the French Reformed theologian Jean Calvin (1509–1564).
4. Arminianism - based on theological ideas of the Dutch Reformed theologian Jacobus Arminius (1560–1609).
  1. A student of Theodore Beza (Calvin’s successor) at the Theological University of Geneva.

### 3. Arminianism and Calvinism in a nutshell.

#### 1. Different views concerning the role of God and man in salvation.

1. Ultimately, it is about *who* chooses *whom*?
2. Does man choose God (Arminianism)?
3. Does God choose man (Calvinism)?

#### 2. Common ground: the nature of fallen man.

1. Adam and Eve, untainted by a sin nature, disobeyed God.
2. Men and women today are conceived with a sin nature—we start out in a vastly-inferior condition than Adam and Eve.
  1. Total depravity — all aspects of man’s nature are tainted by sin.

#### 1. TOTAL - speaks of breadth, not degree.

1. NOT DEGREE - The thoughts and motives of mankind are not always depraved to an extreme degree.
2. BREADTH - No aspect of man, such as the mind, will, emotion, is untainted. Man’s totality was twisted by the fall into sin of Adam and Eve. The fall affected *everything* about mankind.

#### 3. Somehow, in this fallen state, men and women are able to do what Adam and Even did not: obey God and

respond in faith.

4. This is the ministry and work of the Holy Spirit — both in Arminianism and Calvinism.

5. As we'll see, Arminianism and Calvinism differ in their understanding of *how* the Holy Spirit goes about that work.

### 3. Arminianism in a nutshell: man chooses God.

#### 1. Salvation

1. All men are fallen.

2. All men are drawn equally, making all men equally capable of “choosing God.”

3. The sole determining factor in salvation is whether the individual responds—or rejects.

4. Some people, for whatever reason, are more able or willing to exercise faith while others are not.

5. The determining difference in who gets saved resides within man, not in God.

6. A key difference between Arminianism and Calvinism: the nature of God's *foreknowledge*.

1. How are we to understand Romans 8:29-30 which describes the “chain of salvation?”

1. *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined [to be] conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified* (Rom. 8:29-30).

2. Both agree the passage describes a sequence of actions by God: Foreknowledge → predestination → calling → justification → glorification.

3. Arminianism and Calvinism differ in their understanding of the first link in the chain: God's *foreknowledge*.

1. The Arminian position:

1. God's foreknowledge has no determinative aspect: it is simply “knowledge,” decoupled from the influence of His will.

2. God's foreknowledge concerns which people, down through time, will choose Him—exercise saving faith.

3. God knows, in advance, who will choose Him. God then predestines, calls, justifies, and glorifies those individuals<sup>4</sup>

4. Before the foundation of the world (Eph. 1:4-5), God looked down through the corridor of time, saw who would respond in faith and choose Him, then, based on that knowledge, predestined, called, justified, and glorified those individuals<sup>5</sup>

4. The Arminian position decouples *foreknowledge* from *predestination* and understand it as simply “knowing”, but not “determining” or “influencing.”

5. More on this later . . .

#### 2. The work of the Holy Spirit

1. In both systems, the Holy Spirit is able to overcome the darkness of the individual fallen nature making it possible to exercise faith in God and be saved.

#### 2. The Holy Spirit in the Arminian perspective

1. The Holy Spirit draws *all people equally* enabling every person to potentially chose God and be saved<sup>6</sup>

2. What then, prevents all men from doing so—if the Holy Spirit is both willing and able to overcome

man's inborn bent to reject God?

1. Man is able to resist God's will, the drawing of the Holy Spirit, to remain in darkness.
  2. Although God desires all men to be saved, He is unable (or unwilling) to *effectively* draw all.
  3. Man's will can thwart God's desire and ability, by way of the drawing of the Spirit, to save all men.
3. Since man's will is the determining factor in salvation: having believed, Christians remain insecure—we could fall away from the faith and lose our salvation.
1. You might have eternal life now—but lose it next year.
  2. You can fall “in and out” of salvation.
  3. You can avoid hell, but only if you happen to be “in” at the moment you die.
4. This is why Arminianism is sometimes characterized as being a “man-centered gospel.”

### 3. Motivation

1. Theodicy - God is neutral and fair.
  1. The desire to rescue God from the charge of unfairness if He were to choose *some*, but not *all*, for salvation.
  2. The Arminian view of salvation, from the perspective of limited human logic, God seems fair and well-intentioned — He is simply responding to man.
  3. BUT: Arminianism has its own problem trying to justify God's actions.
    1. God knew, in advance—before mankind was created—who would respond to Him and be saved.
    2. Yet, He *still created those who He knew would not respond*—to wind up eternally damned in hell.
    3. Why did He allow those to be born who He knew would not respond? Is God not sovereign over fertility and conception?
2. Evangelism: the belief that every person is equally able to come to faith in God—if they would simply respond.
3. Human Logic: a desire to make the means of salvation acceptable to human logic.
  1. If God desires all men to be saved (1Ti. 2:4), then He must draw all equally
  2. Some doctrines are highly complex and become distorted when we force them to bow to human logic
    1. Trinity
    2. Limited atonement / particular redemption (when Calvinism falls prey to this error)

### 4. Calvinism in a nutshell: God chooses man.

1. Salvation
  1. Like Arminianism, all men are fallen.
  2. God “elects” *some* men and women from among all people throughout history for salvation.
    1. Others are passed by—left in their fallen condition (Rom. 9:22-24).
    2. Only the elect are capable of exercising faith and “choosing God.”
  3. The sole determining factor in salvation is God's election.

1. Back to the “chain of salvation” of Romans 8:29-30
2. *For whom He foreknew, He also predestined [to be] conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified* (Rom. 8:29-30).
3. For the Calvinist, no portion of this chain depends on human response.
4. Calvinism rejects the circular choosing “slight of hand” of Arminianism which prepends an additional link prior to foreknowledge where *men choose God* Who, knowing their upcoming choice in advance, backs up in time to *call and choose them* in advance of their choosing Him.
5. Calvinists believe the chain is strictly in-sequence within time and (truly) begins with God’s *foreknowledge*.
  1. The Arminian position detaches *foreknowledge* from *predestination*, understanding foreknowledge as simply “knowing” without “determining” or “influencing.”
  2. The Calvinist believes the Bible to teach that God’s foreknowledge includes God’s willful determination and influence, not just simply knowing (e.g., Acts 2:23).
  3. Two lexicons discuss the Greek terms behind God’s foreknowledge:
 

*ginōskō* is used in the NT first of all of the divine foreknowledge, in relation to which the idea of election is always present. . . . this foreknowledge is not simply knowledge without participation, but rather a “creative willing” . . . In the introduction to 1 Peter (1:1) the readers are addressed as “chosen” in accordance with God’s foreknowledge (v. 2). This election is based on God’s decree . . . <sup>7</sup>

In sum, both the verb and noun speak primarily of God’s action toward Christ or toward humans, witnessing to that activity as planned and directed.<sup>8</sup>
  4. The connection between God’s foreknowledge and purpose is made explicit in Acts 2:23
    1. *Him [Christ], being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death* (Acts 2:23).

## 2. The work of the Holy Spirit

1. As with Arminianism, the Holy Spirit is able to overcome the darkness of the individual fallen nature making it possible to exercise faith in God and be saved.
2. The Holy Spirit in the Calvinist perspective.
  1. The Holy Spirit draws the elect, enabling them to exercise faith in God and be saved.
  2. The elect cannot thwart the drawing of the Spirit. All the elect—every last one—WILL be saved.
  3. Only the non-elect miss salvation.
3. Since God is the determining factor, once we believe, Christians are eternally secure in the faith.
4. This is why Calvinism is sometimes characterized as being a “God-centered gospel.”

## 3. Motivation

### 1. Faithfulness to Scripture

1. Predestination, election and calling are “all over” the NT.
2. God’s foreknowledge cannot be simplified down to “simply knowing” without a determining element of His will.
3. The salvation experience is everywhere attributed to God, not man.

1. Time permits only a tiny sampling of verses on this huge topic.
2. “born again”, or “born from above” (John 3:3, 7; 1Pe. 1:3, 23)
  1. Whoever brought themselves to conception and birth?
3. “born of God” (John 1:13; 1Jn. 5:1, 18)
  1. *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* (John 1:12-13)
4. Given/granted by the Father.
  1. *All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out* (John 6:37).
    1. Not all have been given by the Father.
  2. *And He said, “Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.”* (John 6:65).
    1. Not all have been granted by the Father.
5. Called/appointed of God.
  1. *For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.*(Acts 2:39).
    1. All who are called are saved—not a general call.
  2. *Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed* (Acts 13:48).
    1. The ones that were appointed, from among those which heard, were the ones who believed.
    2. The ones who did not believe were not appointed.
6. Arminians read these same passages, but make the initiative of God (birthing, giving, granting, calling, appointing) subject to only those God knows in advance will choose Him.
7. But if He knows they are going to exercise saving faith, where is the need for all this business of birthing, giving, granting, calling, and appointing?
8. This is the Arminian “chicken and egg” dilemma.

## 2. **Biblical evangelism**

1. The sophistication and cleverness of our evangelistic schemes is not the determining factor in the effectiveness of evangelism.
2. We can share the hard truths of Scripture without fear of “offending or losing possible converts” because our faithfulness to proclaim truth is what the Holy Spirit will honor and use.
3. We don’t know who the elect are, so predestination and election are irrelevant in determining when and whom to preach to—we assume every person we come in contact with may be among the elect.
  1. Famous evangelists include committed Calvinists: George Whitefield, Charles Spurgeon, David Brainerd, William Carey.
4. Judicial hardening: a difficult aspect of God’s evangelistic purpose is that our faithfulness to preach the unvarnished truth serves to harden and condemn those who God knows will never come to faith.

## 3. **Theodicy - Calvinism does not attempt to sanitize God’s sovereignty.**

1. From man’s perspective and limited logic, God seems unfair in that he passes over some.

2. Like Paul, we recognize the charge men will level against God: accusing Him of unfairness or unrighteousness.

1. *What shall we say then? [Is there] unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!* (Rom. 9:14)

2. *You will say to me then, "Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?"* (Rom. 9:19)

3. Like Paul, we rest in God's sovereignty and character — He doesn't need our defence against the limited conclusions of human logic.

1. *But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed [it], "Why have you made me like this?"* (Rom. 9:20)

#### 4. Arminianism and Romans 9

1. If you want to cut to the chase when discussing these aspects with someone of the Arminian persuasion, ask them to explain why Paul wrote these statements in Romans 9?

1. "Is there unrighteousness with God?" (Rom. 9:14)

2. "Why does He still find fault . . . who has resisted His will?" (Rom. 9:19)

2. The thorny questions Paul raises in Romans 9 would never arise if man's will, rather than God's, determines who is saved.

3. If the Arminian view of salvation is true and God's predestination of an individual is in response to the faith of that individual, there is no reason to accuse God of potential unrighteousness or unfairness.

4. Arminianism wants to side-step these difficult questions by re-ordering what the Bible teaches concerning the process of salvation.

5. In the end, Arminianism's misplaced desire to "sanitize God" also subverts Biblical truth concerning the extent of God's sovereignty.

#### 4. Summary

##### 1. Key differences

###### 1. Election

1. Arminianism - based on God's foreknowledge in history of who will choose Him.
2. Calvinism - based on God's sovereign will, some are passed over.

###### 2. Work of the Holy Spirit

1. Arminianism - all are drawn, enabled to believe, but some are able to resist the Spirit and reject God.
2. Calvinism - only some drawn, those who are drawn are irresistibly drawn: guaranteed to come to faith.
3. Arminianism: salvation is by the Spirit's enablement *combined with* the ability of a subset of men to respond.
4. Calvinism: salvation is by the Spirit's enablement, *period*.

[\(Tony Garland - Acts 16:13-15 The Lord Opened Her Heart\)](#)

#### Related Resources:

- [Calvinism vs. Arminianism - which view is correct?](#)
- [What is Calvinism and is it biblical? What are the five points of Calvinism?](#)
- [What is Arminianism, and is it biblical?](#)
- [What is Amyraldism / Four-Point Calvinism?](#)
- [Could Calvinism be a stumbling block to the spread of the gospel of Christ?](#)

- [Who was Jacobus Arminius?](#)