

## ***Two Kinds of Ministry Power***

Paul and Silas are Jailed and Set Free

### **The Empowered Church Series – part 29**

Acts 16:16-40

9/16/23-9/17/23

#### **Introduction**

- **Be Strong and Courageous - [complete]**
- **Don't Forget People are Involved in Your Ministry - [complete]**

#### **COURAGE and COMPASSION**

#### **• Recap: Where we are at in the story**

- **Last week** – Paul, Silas, Timothy & Luke land on the shores of Europe as Christian missionaries for the first time, meet a woman named Lydia and stay in her house as the homebase of mission operations.

#### **Lesson**

##### **• Demonic Preaching**

- **Paul Casts a Demon Out of a Slave Girl**
  - **Acts 16:16-18** – *“As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit<sup>1</sup> of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling.<sup>17</sup> She followed Paul and us, crying out, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.”<sup>18</sup> 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.”*
  - **The place of prayer** – this is the makeshift female-run synagogue that they met Lydia in earlier. They are doing more outreach. They were coming from the homebase of the “new church”<sup>2</sup> in Lydia’s house.
  - **A slave girl** – what does this mean and **what does this entail?** The fact that the term is ‘girl’ (young girl<sup>3</sup>, but not a child, probably pre-teen or young teen), demonstrates that it’s likely she was picked up early and had only known slavery. Slavery in the ancient world was not like the slavery of America (chattel slavery) but it could be brutal depending on the owner. The bottom line was that you were owned and therefore didn’t make your own decisions. Whatever she was

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<sup>1</sup> “Of an evil spirit, demon, mostly used with the adj. *akátharton* (169), unclean, as an unclean spirit (Matt. 10:1; 12:43, 45; Mark 1:23, 26, 27; 3:11, 30; 5:2, 8, 13; 6:7; 7:25; 9:17, a spirit that could not speak; 9:25; Luke 4:33, unclean spirit of a demon; 4:36; 6:18; 7:21; 8:2, 29; 9:42; 11:24, 26; 13:11, “a spirit of infirmity,” meaning causing infirmity; Acts 5:16; 8:7; 16:16, “a spirit of divination,” a soothsaying demon; 19:12, 13, 15, 16; Rev. 16:13, 14; 18:2). Used in an absolute sense (Matt. 8:16; Mark 9:20; Luke 9:39; 10:20; Eph. 2:2, meaning Satan).” Complete Word Study Dictionary

<sup>2</sup> Maybe only consisting of Lydia and her household who got baptized at this point. It’s all new.

<sup>3</sup> “παιδίσκη *paidískē*; gen. *paidískēs*, fem. noun, a diminutive of *páis* (3816), a girl. A young girl, maiden.” Complete Word Study Dictionary

involved in was not her original idea whether she had embraced it by this point or not. This is human trafficking.

- **A spirit of divination**<sup>4</sup> – what is this? The word is ‘spirit’ with a descriptor (pytho). Spirit as a word can be used in a lot of meanings. Here it is speaking of **an evil spirit**, unclean spirit, demonic spirit. The term that Paul uses to describe her spirit is a ‘**python**’ or ‘pythian spirit’. This is a very specific reference. In the **city of Delphi**,<sup>5</sup> Greece, there was a incredibly popular pagan religious site where people could come from all over and get their fortunes told. They could seek the pagan gods. This was through the **Delphi oracles**, which were women (usually gathered against their will), who were, for all purposes, drugged and forced to seek demonic spirits for people. The way it was assumed and sold to people was that this was a special place where the god Apollo would speak to the people. This of course was a money making operation. So, this particular lady was either a current slave/employee who was off rotation and now traveling around to gain money, or she was a trainee or former oracle who was sold to different men to make money off her ‘gift’. Why ‘python’? Not only was Pytho the original name of the city before Delphi, but because mythology said that Apollos defeated the great snake god Python at this location. This was said to be the center-point geographically of the earth (they thought the earth was flat) and where East and West met, so it was sacred. The great heyday of this location was between the

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<sup>4</sup> She is described by Luke as “having a pythian spirit” or being a “pythia”—that is, a person inspired by Apollo, the Greek deity specially associated with the giving of oracles, who was worshiped as the “Pythian” god at the oracular shrine of Delphi in central Greece. His priestess there was the Pythian prophet par excellence; the girl of whom Luke speaks was a very pale reflection of her.” NICNT, F.F. Bruce

<sup>5</sup> “*The pan-Hellenic sanctuary of Delphi, where the oracle of Apollo spoke, was the site of the omphalos, the 'navel of the world'. Blending harmoniously with the superb landscape and charged with sacred meaning, Delphi in the 6th century B.C. was indeed the religious centre and symbol of unity of the ancient Greek world...At the same time, their fame and prestige spread throughout the whole of the then known world, from which pilgrims came to the site to receive an oracle from the Pythia, the priestess of Apollo. A place with a rich intangible heritage, Delphi was the centre of the world (omphalos) in the eyes of the ancient Greeks: according to myth, it was the meeting point of two eagles released by Zeus, one to the East and one in the West. The magnificent monumental complex is a human-made environment in perfect harmony with the rare natural environment, the principal features of which gave rise to the organisation of the cults. This harmonious relationship, which has remained undisturbed from ancient times to the present day, makes Delphi a unique monument and a priceless legacy bequeathed by the ancient Greek world to following generations...Delphi bears a unique testimony to the religion and civilization of ancient Greece. At the legendary site where Apollo slew the serpent Python, celestial cults replaced chthonian cults and introduced the old heritage of myths originating from primitive times. The Delphic oracle, over which four sacred wars were fought, is one of the focal points of Greek political history, while the Theatre and the Stadium, where the Pythian Games took place every four years, were places of community celebrations reflecting triumphant Hellenism.*” <https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/393/>

“According to the usual procedure, **sponsors** were necessary, as was the provision of a pelanos (ritual cake) and a sacrificial beast that conformed to rigid physical standards. The Pythia and her consultants first bathed in the Castalian spring; afterward, the Pythia drank from the sacred spring Cassotis and then entered the temple. There she apparently descended into a basement cell, mounted a sacred tripod, and chewed leaves of the laurel, Apollo’s sacred tree. The Pythia often went into an **ecstatic** state and would channel Apollo. Some have claimed that her altered condition was the result of gases—such as **ethylene** and **methane**—that were emitted from geologic **fault lines** underneath the temple. Whatever the cause, the Pythia would speak, intelligibly or otherwise. Her words, however, were not directly recorded by the inquirer; instead, they were interpreted and written down by the priests in what was often highly ambiguous verse.” <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Delphic-oracle>

8<sup>th</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, which was about 400 years before this story, so it had dwindled to mostly religious shrines and lore. Rome captured Delphi in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC (250 years before this story).

- **Fortune-telling<sup>6</sup>** – The demonic spirits in this girl would periodically give messages through her to people which sometimes would predict the future. Were they always accurate? Probably not since Satan is the father of lies and the demons follow suit. But they do have more access to secret information than we do, as well as lightyears more knowledge and wisdom to dupe anyone. So, it seemed relatively legit and people that were desperate for help discerning their lives would seek this and pay handsomely for it. So, yes, it was real, but it wasn't good. Those are two different things.
- **The crew she was following** – remember, we currently have at least a group of 4: Paul, Silas, Timothy & Luke. It's unknown who else was there.
- **Why she was following them** – This seems to suggest that she was 'sent out' as her owners to go get money as opposed to being handled or followed by her owners. She was a money maker. But interestingly this seems to have sidetracked her whole business. I don't know if she was trying to ply her trade on their new followers in town, or whether the demons just got off track and started following them to harass them because it was more important to them. It could also be that the girl inside her (the real her) was desperate to be around them and was drawn to them and couldn't leave. Regardless the **demons** weren't there to help Paul and his team out. They **were there to distract and harass**.
- **Her message** – she had a bizarre message for a demon-possessed person. Why would she say these things? **All of the recorded statements are CORRECT.** That's the weird part of it. It's not the content that was a problem, it was the tone and the delivery.
  - **Crying out** – she was yelling this stuff, which right off the bat is super distracting and jarring. You only cry out if you are desperate or trying to be a distraction to get someone's attention off what they are doing to pay attention to what you are saying. It was also probably an irritating tone from a young girl
  - **These men are servants** – It's true. They were. They were servants. The gospel wasn't their creation and they weren't there to build their own kingdom. They were serving God 100%.
  - **Of the Most High God<sup>7</sup>** – this is a non-offensive way to Gentiles and Jews to say Creator God whom everyone ultimately wanted to know (unless you had

<sup>6</sup> This girl's involuntary utterances were regarded as the voice of the god, and she was thus much in demand by people who wished to have their fortunes told or to receive information or advice which they believed could be supplied from such a source." NICNT, F.F. Bruce

<sup>7</sup> "The title "God Most High" provided Jews and Gentiles with a convenient common denominator for the supreme being...In LXX θεὸς ὑψιστος is the rendering of 'ēl 'elyōn, the divine designation found in Gen. 14:18, etc. For its use by Gentiles cf. Num. 24:16; Isa. 14:14; Dan. 3:26 (LXX/Theod. 3:93); 1 Esdr. 2:3. In Mark 5:7 "Legion" address Jesus as ὑὲ τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψιστοῦ. Josephus (*Ant.* 16.163) quotes an edict of Augustus in which Hyrcanus II is called ἀρχιερεὺς θεοῦ ὑψιστοῦ. With the slave girl's use of θεὸς ὑψιστος here compare (and contrast) Stephen's use of ὁ ὑψιστος in 7:48. See A. B. Cook, *Zeus II.2* (Cambridge, 1925), p. 889; A. Deissmann, *Light from the Ancient East*, E.T. (London, <sup>2</sup>1927), pp. 413–24; A. D. Nock, C. H. Roberts, and T. C. Skeat, "The Gild of Zeus Hypsistos" (1936), in Nock, *Essays*, pp. 414–43; also *CJ* 2. 1433, where a synagogue in Alexandria (second century B.C.) is dedicated θεῷ ὑψιστῷ, and other dedications cited in *New Docs.* 1 (1976), § 5." NICNT

a particular god of the Romans or Greeks – which most Roman citizens did). Again, it's accurate. Yahweh is the Most High God. This term is used of Him and used specifically of the Father and Jesus.

- **Who proclaim to you the way of salvation** – who doesn't want to be saved? It's non-offensive and it's accurate. They are here to proclaim how people could be saved from their sins and the wrath of God for those sins. All of that is true.
- **She kept doing it for MANY DAYS** – this is where it starts to get weird (beyond the yelling). She just keeps doing it. I love that Paul let it go on this long. He is very patient with her for a while. But boy was it grating on his nerves.
  - **Why not cast demons first day?** – interestingly Paul, who seems to know that it's demonic the whole time, lets it go on for DAYS. Why not just cast them out right away? You don't want to normally cast out demons from someone who doesn't want demons gone. It can make them worse. This girl didn't ask for the demons out. It would be problematic for them to be gone for her and the crew. So, Paul was letting God run the show and determine what should be done, when.
- **Paul became GREATLY annoyed** – I think this is so **funny** (it's probably not but it sounds like it). He finally had it and spun around ticked off to shut this thing down.
- **Paul said to the spirit** – Paul bypassed the girl and spoke directly to the demon in her. **Can we speak to demons? Absolutely we can and when necessary we should.**
- **I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come OUT of her** – **this was a COMMAND not a CONVERSATION.** Paul isn't interested in what the demon has to say. He doesn't care what it's name is. He's not getting into interaction with it. It has to go, period. So he spins around, and loudly and confidently casts it out. But notice how that's done. It's done on the authority and in the name of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ has the authority over all powers and the demonic. We only do because of Him and who (the Holy Spirit) is in us.
  - **Casting demons – is this a thing today?** Yep. Bridgeway has a ministry that deals with this very thing. And it's busy. **It's about taking the power and authority of God, living in our identity, and setting people free that want to be free, or who God wants to set free regardless.**
- **It came out at that very hour** – That's a weird phrase for me. It sounds like it was delayed, but all other indicators mean that it was immediate. So we'll go with immediate.

- **Highs and Lows**
  - **Paul & Silas are Beaten and Thrown in Prison**

- **Acts 16:19-24** – “But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace<sup>8</sup> before the rulers.  
<sup>20</sup> And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, “These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. <sup>21</sup> They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice.” <sup>22</sup> The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods.  
<sup>23</sup> And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. <sup>24</sup> Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.”
- **Their hope of gain was gone** – no demon, no messages, no fortune telling, no money. Yup. Ruined that plan.
- **They seized Paul & Silas<sup>9</sup>** – This is kind of like a citizen’s arrest. It’s crazy that they could just grab someone and force them to go the marketplace. Apparently they were influential enough to do that and confident enough (or mad enough) to do it.
- **Brought them into the marketplace before the rulers** – this is the Philippian forum. It’s where all business was done and a lot of commerce. It would be the business center of the city and where the legalities would be handled.
  - **Magistrates<sup>10</sup>** – These were the local city leaders on Rome’s behalf. Their job was primarily to keep the peace and make sure their city isn’t causing trouble for the Empire.
  - **These men are Jews<sup>11</sup>** – what does that have to do with it? We have to remember that now that we are in Europe (Greece) we are in the **Western part of the world that isn’t primarily Jewish anymore**. There was a lot of anti-Semitic (anti-Jewish) feeling in this part of the world because of the tensions that Rome had in Israel (which ultimately will lead to Rome sacking Jerusalem in about 25-30 years from this story).
  - **They are disturbing our city<sup>12</sup>** – why this is such a key phrase – The number one job of the local authorities was to **not let their city be a problem for the Empire**. For someone to jeopardize that and bring down bigger authority and penalties on their head was a big deal. These owners knew the buttons to push.
    - **The charge: advocating illegal customs – against Roman laws and practices<sup>13</sup>** – so, what was the charge against Paul & Silas (the leaders of their crew)? It was doing non-Roman stuff and stirring things up. Proselytizing by

<sup>8</sup> “Gk. ἀγορά, which, in reference to a Roman city, is a translation of *forum*. The forum of Philippi, which lies on the south side of the Egnatian Way, is one of the chief features of the site, although the buildings seen today date mostly from the time of Marcus Aurelius (161–80).” NICNT

<sup>9</sup> “Luke and Timothy were apparently unmolested: Paul and Silas were not only the leaders of the party but also most obviously Jews (Luke was a Gentile and Timothy a half-Gentile)... Anti-Jewish sentiment lay very near the surface in pagan antiquity.” NICNT

<sup>10</sup> “As Philippi was a Roman colony, its municipal administration, like that of Rome itself, was in the hands of two collegiate magistrates. The collegiate magistrates of a Roman colony were commonly called *duumvirs*, but in some places they preferred the more dignified title of *praetors*, and this is what the chief magistrates of Philippi were apparently called.” NICNT

<sup>11</sup> “Moreover, the men who had infringed these rights were not Roman citizens like themselves (or so they thought); they were not even Greeks, like the population around them, but wandering Jews, engaged in propagating some variety of their own perverse superstition.” NICNT

<sup>12</sup> “The magistrates were bound in any case to take cognizance of such religious activity as threatened to provoke a breach of the peace or to encourage unlawful practices or organizations; and Paul and Silas were charged with precisely this kind of activity.” NICNT

<sup>13</sup> “Proselytization of Roman citizens by Jews was not positively illegal, so far as the evidence indicates, but it certainly incurred strong disapproval.” NICNT

Jews (which wasn't normally a thing they did) wasn't illegal but with the racial and political tensions, it was frowned upon.

- **The crowd joined in attacking them** – why did the crowd get involved? It was likely the same reason. **Anti-Jewish feelings and outsiders messing up their city.**
- **Magistrates ordered their beating with rods<sup>14</sup>** – what did this entail? It's literally hitting you with sticks. The beater guys were called lictors. It was punishment by beating.
  - **They inflicted many blows** – the Jewish version in the Old Testament (Dt 25:3) was 4 blows, or sometimes lashes, minus one = 39 hits. Usually that was done with a whip, but when it's a rod it was similar. In other words, **they beat them really bad.**
- **Threw them in prison** – Imprisonment in the ancient world (and partially in the modern world) is not just scary because of the conditions you are about to walk into and the people you are about to interact with, but the question if you will ever come out again. Although Rome had a decent idea of due process in the judicial capacity, there was no guarantee that corruption wasn't going to do you in and you'd never leave.
  - **Gave jailer orders** – The jailer was likely a former military guy. His job was to be the warden of the prison. He was doing his job and got his orders.
  - **Put in an inner prison** – It seems that there was a main body of the prison where everyone would go and then there was an inner holding location (maybe downstairs) that special prisoners would go. It was harder to break out (or be broken out) in there, so it was extra secure. It's not clear why these strangers would get such treatment. Who are they? But nevertheless here they are.
  - **Fastened feet with stocks<sup>15</sup>** – Stocks normally went around your feet and kept you from running away. There are times and locations where hand stocks and neck stocks were used but that's not likely here.
- **Ministry Cost** – This is brutal stuff. Being beaten and thrown in jail, chained up with your life at risk all the time. Wow! Who signs up for that kind of ministry? Would you? How would Christianity have taken root without those who were willing to do so. **If Christianity's advancement was placed on your shoulders how far would it go?**

- **Jailhouse Rocked**
  - **As Paul & Silas Worship, God Opens the Jail**

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<sup>14</sup> "The lictors were the official attendants on the chief magistrates in Rome and other Roman cities. They carried as symbols of office bundles of rods, with an axe inserted among them in certain circumstances—the *fasces et securis*<sup>59</sup>—denoting the magistrates' right to inflict corporal and, where necessary, capital punishment. It was with the lictors' rods that the two missionaries were beaten on this occasion. It was not the only time that Paul had this treatment meted out to him: five or six years later he claims to have been beaten with rods three times (2 Cor. 11:25), although we have no information about the two other occasions." NICNT

<sup>15</sup> "When, after this severe beating, they were handed over to the jailer's custody, he interpreted his instructions strictly and fastened their legs in the stocks, in the inmost part of the prison. These stocks had more than two holes for the legs, which could thus be forced apart in such a way as to cause the utmost discomfort and cramping pain. It was not the jailer's business to take any thought for his prisoners' comfort, but to make sure that they did not escape." NICNT

- **Acts 16:25-26** – “About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them,<sup>26</sup> and suddenly there was a great earthquake<sup>16</sup>, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone’s bonds were unfastened.”
- **About midnight** – why so late? I have to believe that this was intentional by God, but for what purpose? My guess would be that everyone would be asleep or chill and it allowed more of a controlled situation than one in the middle of the day with magistrates coming in and out all day long. This would allow some space for it to be just the jail folks and time to do ministry.
- **Their prison behavior** – this is odd behavior to an outsider looking in. They had been beaten severely, locked up and put in chains, BUT...
  - **Praying aloud** – does praying aloud make you nervous? Does it seem weird when other people do it? It’s powerful. What if God only answered the prayers that you said aloud, how many would that be? Now, we don’t have to pray aloud, but it’s important for that to be part of our repertoire because somethings require it (Intercession for others, commanding spirits, getting out of your own head, group prayer, etc.). **It’s something that we as a body of Bridgeway should work on.** What were they praying about? Maybe just normal prayers. Maybe about their situation. Maybe all of that.
  - **Singing hymns to God** – This is perhaps the oddest behavior for a prison. **Most of us let our circumstance or context determine our praise and worship.** But Paul and Silas didn’t. **They were praising from a full heart and their surroundings didn’t impact that.** This is so inspiring to me. **They didn’t let the aching and stinging backs, or the foot stocks that didn’t let them sleep well, or the fear of tomorrow, dull their praise of an ever-worthy God.**
  - **The impact: prisoners were listening to them** – they knew they were being heard and **God was using their boldness to do ministry in that prison.** People were being impacted just by listening to these men’s prayers and praises. Powerful.
  - **A great earthquake that shook the foundations of the prison** – Earthquakes are relatively common in that area of the world, so this was not the shocking part. It did happen to be a BIG one that actually shook down to the foundations of the prison. So, did God time all of this with a normal fault line giving way, or did some angels shake things around? It doesn’t say. Either is just as miraculous.
    - **All the doors sprang open** – this first impact is almost normal, the ground shook, the foundations shifted, it threw things akilter and the doors broke open. That kind of makes sense. Although it seems that just the inner prison doors were opened and not the main prison doors, so that’s **pretty selective if you ask me.** Otherwise the jailer would have spent his whole time running around the main jail to stop prisoners and not able to come down here and

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<sup>16</sup> “This was a district where earthquakes were by no means uncommon. The door was locked by a wooden bar falling into two slots, and the stocks were similarly fastened. The earthquake shook the bar free, and the prisoners were freed from their chains and the door was open.” William Barclay, Daily Bible Study Commentary

spend time with Paul and Silas who seemingly had the influence to stop the guys around them (if there were any) from running.

- **Everyone's bonds were unfastened** – But this is where it gets **super miraculous**. Earthquakes should loosen bonds on people. I don't care if it strategically broke the bolts off the wall in the foundation shift, or if it broke it at the people's legs (even more radical), it's miraculous and there's no doubt. The breaking of bonds seems to be our crew only (or primarily) since they were in a smaller inner prison, although when ALL the doors spring open maybe there were others that had access to escape.

- **An Unusual Church**

- **Paul & Silas Lead the Jailer to Christ**

- **Acts 16:27-34**<sup>17</sup> – *"When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped."*<sup>28</sup> *But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here."*<sup>29</sup> *And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas.*<sup>30</sup> *Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"*<sup>31</sup> *And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household."*<sup>32</sup> *And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.*<sup>33</sup> *And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family.*<sup>34</sup> *Then he brought them up into his house*<sup>18</sup> *and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God."*

- **The jailer woke** – why was he sleeping? This is **the warden who lived there full time**. His house was on one floor or in one section and the jail was connected. He knew everyone was on lock down so as normal he went back home (down the hall or up the stairs) and went to sleep. He was jarred awake.
  - **He assessed the situation and realized the consequence** – he knew the rules for police, for guards, for jailers: **if you let someone escape, it's on your life**. He knew that any prisoner would take advantage of the situation, and that was a **HUGE** earthquake and likely did structural damage, so he was as good as dead.
  - **Was about to kill himself with his sword** – the honorable thing, according to the Roman conduct code, was to run yourself through with a short sword and pay for what you allowed to happen on your watch. He was going to do that.
  - **Paul shouted: don't do it, we are all here** – Thankfully (per the Holy Spirit) he heard Paul's shouts to stop. There must have been dust and smoke everywhere and it was rather chaotic (especially if you just woke up). Paul shouts for him to stop the suicide process. Why? Because he too was their ministry. **Sometimes we forget that those who harm us and are in our way are still our ministry. We**

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<sup>17</sup> "This paragraph bears the marks of being an independent narrative, inserted by Luke into the record of events at Philippi. He probably derived it from another source than its context: if verse 35 had followed immediately after verse 24, the reader would have been conscious of no hiatus. But we may be glad that Luke did add it at this point: it enriches his account of Paul's Philippian ministry." NICNT

<sup>18</sup> The Western text inserts "having secured the other prisoners." NICNT

compartmentalize how we can hate those who stand against our Christian view. That's wrong.

- **The jailer rushed in trembling with fear and fell down before them** – this is an interesting response, and I would suggest that it means that **there was prior connection before this**. What I mean is that it's unusual for a jailer who never talked to a prisoner, to run into a chaotic mess and have a guy say, 'we are all here', to believe him and allow that to stop a suicide attempt and THEN fall down in fear and trembling before them. I'm certain that in the day prior, the jailer observed something different about these men and saw their conduct was totally different. He had probably been nudged by the Holy Spirit to dwell on who they were and what was happening. By this time he was realizing that all of that was true and so much more. These were men who were likely connected to the One who caused the earthquake (Romans were superstitious in their polytheism). He had heard their messages and the charges against them. He had asked questions and now he'd seen proof. It was time to respond.
- **Sirs, what must I do to be saved?** – What a weird question. What was he really asking? **Is this a retcon situation** where the person who wrote this down was summarizing his thoughts and it was more of a rambling in real life? I don't know. **But in essence, whether he said it right or not, this is what he wanted to know.** What can I do to be and do what I was built to be and do and to connect with the great God that could do something like an earthquake?
- **Their response – they were ready with a response. Are we?**
  - **Believe** – It's always important to remember that belief in the New Testament is **not simply awareness**, but a willing engagement with that new reality. It means that we act on it. **It means more like TRUST.**
  - **In the Lord Jesus** – Of course the jailer doesn't know who this is so that will have to be explained in a moment (which they do if you keep reading). The statement is still true (and gives a retcon feature as well, for future readers). We trust (surrender to; believe He is who He said He is and can do what He said He can do) in the true MASTER (that's the word 'lord'), Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah and Savior.
  - **You will be saved** – Your sins will be forgiven and washed. You will be saved from the wrath of God coming against that sin. You will be saved from a meaningless existence (as you are born again into who you were designed to be and connected to God). You will be saved from yourself and your destructive behaviors as you allow God to dictate your life and choices. You will be saved from further harming those around you and the regret that comes with it as you are sanctified. And the list goes on. **Salvation is not just a ticket to heaven but a holistic rescue.**
  - **You and your household** – Here we have that phrase again that we saw with Lydia: a household. It means that he was the **boss of his household** (wife, kids, servants). What the master of the house does, everyone does. They would be influenced immediately. It also has a hint of the message of the gospel being available **not just for the few but for everyone.**

- **More to the message: they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house** – **It was not just one line that the jailer responded to and changed his life.** It was the explanation of that one incredibly powerful phrase.
- **The Impact:** there was immediate change in him and in the scenario after salvation. **It wasn't just a feeling, but it resulted in true transformation.**
- **Jailer immediately washed their wounds** – he went from a wounder (stocks and chains) to a healer. How incredible is that? It meant that the relationship between them instantly shifted to that of friend and even servant. He wanted to bless them for what they had shared with him. He knew that they were hurting and they could get infected.
- **He was baptized at once** – no waiting around. Let's get this done. Why? It was **part of owning the process and going public immediately** for both personal ownership and community connection.
- **His whole family was baptized immediately** – they did what he did. That doesn't mean that they all had a personal relationship with Jesus Christ but that they were now in a Christian culture and could work it out from there.
- **He brought them into his home**<sup>19</sup> – This would have been **either upstairs or connected next door** so it wasn't a long way and they didn't leave the facility. As warden he was allowed to bring them anywhere **on the grounds and not get in trouble.**
- **He fed them** – this was a personal fellowship move. He invited them to the table of his home as friends.
- **He and his household rejoiced<sup>20</sup> over his salvation** – that household changed that day and was never the same I would imagine. They were so overjoyed not just at not losing the head of the household (suicide) but for everyone hearing the good news.

- **Not Just Yet...**
  - **Paul Demands an Apology from the Government**
    - **Acts 16:35-40** – *“But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, “Let those men go.”*<sup>36</sup> *And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, “The magistrates have sent to let you go. Therefore come out now and go in peace.”*<sup>37</sup> *But Paul said to them, “They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out.”*<sup>38</sup> *The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they heard that they were Roman citizens.*<sup>39</sup> *So they came and apologized to them. And they took them out and asked them to leave the city.*<sup>40</sup> *So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed.”*

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<sup>19</sup> “It was on an upper floor, if one may judge from ḥvayaywó.” NICNT

<sup>20</sup> “If nothing is said explicitly of their receiving the Holy Spirit, this is implied in the emphasis on the rejoicing which filled the house.” NICNT

- **The next morning**<sup>21</sup> – wild night. No one got any sleep.
- **Magistrates said to release them via the police** – The big dogs of the city knew they had no rights to hold them and it's possible that the other crew members were lobbying on their behalf.
- **Jailer told them the news and released them** – they sent word through couriers (police) to let them go.
- **Paul's not having it**<sup>22</sup> – Paul puts his foot down and is really, really stubborn.  
**Why is this?** Is it that he was personally insulted? Is it that he was concerned about leaving a city of new believers that would get treated the same? Was he interested in changing the opinion of the local city culture that saw some rough treatment? It's hard to say. Usually it's Paul's nature to try to pave the way for others instead of a personal vendetta, although he was an educated guy who may have been agitated by ignorance and stupidity.
  - **They beat us publicly** – That was a no-no for a Roman citizen. Penalties usually were behind closed doors due to not wanting to air dirty laundry of citizens.
  - **We were uncondemned**<sup>23</sup> – they didn't follow the Roman due process which they were legally bound too.
  - **We are Roman citizens**<sup>24</sup> – He should have led with this because that would have set everything else differently. It's possible that he did claim this initially but no one was listening because it was about lashing out and not about listening. These are the most condemning words.
  - **They threw us in prison** – again, without legal cause and reasons this wasn't allowed.
  - **They want to brush it under the rug (secret release)** – this is the strongest indicator that he was wanting to carve out space for other believers so that this didn't happen to them. He wants a visible and public shift and accountability for the authorities.
  - **Nope!** – one thing we know about Paul is that he is stubborn.

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<sup>21</sup> "After "at daybreak" the Western text continues: "the praetors came together into the forum and, calling to mind the earthquake that had taken place, they were struck with fear and sent the lictors ..." An answer was thus supplied to the natural question: What effect did the earthquake have on people outside the prison precincts?" NICNT

<sup>22</sup> "Paul's insistence on an official apology may have served in some degree as a protection to them for the time being. (That the Christians of Philippi had to endure persecution for their faith some years later is evident from Phil. 1:27–30.) NICNT

<sup>23</sup> "Gk. ἀκατακρίτους, "uncondemned" (the Western text has ἀνατίτους, "not guilty"). Here, as in 22:25, the Greek word may represent *re incognita*, "without investigating our case" (cf. W. M. Ramsay, *St. Paul the Traveller*, pp. 224–25)." NICNT

<sup>24</sup> "He and his companion were Roman citizens—as good Roman citizens as the colonists and magistrates of Philippi—and their rights as Roman citizens had been grossly violated. The charges against them ought to have been properly investigated, but they had been beaten and imprisoned without any inquiry. By a series of Valerian and Porcian laws enacted between the beginning of the Roman Republic and the early second century B.C. Roman citizens were exempted from degrading forms of punishment and had certain valued rights established for them in relation to the law. These privileges had been more recently reaffirmed under the empire by a Julian law dealing with public disorder. Why then did not Paul appeal to his Roman citizenship the day before? The answer sometimes given, that it would have been embarrassing for him to have to claim privileges which Silas could not share, seems to be excluded by the plain implication of the present passage, that both Silas and he were Roman citizens. It may be that they did protest at the time, but that no one paid any attention to them in the excitement of the moment. A Roman citizen claimed his legal rights by the affirmation *civis Romanus sum*, "I am a Roman citizen." It is uncertain if there was any documentary evidence which could be produced on the spot in confirmation of the claim. Paul was probably registered as a Roman citizen in the public record office at Tarsus, and a certified copy of the registration might be obtained, but did he carry this around with him wherever he went?" NICNT

- **Make them come and get us publicly and apologize** – This is where Paul makes it public. He's now the one making demands. They done messed up.
- **The magistrates were afraid due to Roman citizenship** – Remember, their job was to keep the peace and not disrupt the main Empire. This particular offense could go through the channels and cause the city officials to get into trouble and in a anti-Roman way. This could get really nasty for them.
- **They came, apologized, and escorted them to the gates<sup>25</sup>** – **They couldn't force a citizen to leave**, but they can be really nice, apologize, and escort them to the gates and ask them to leave. Paul got what he wanted. They were both humbled and the city people saw it.
- **They visited Lydia** – they went back to their homebase and said their goodbyes since they were moving on from Philippi. Notice they didn't immediately leave the city, but they did so relatively quickly in obedience to the wishes of the officials.
  - **They visited with the brothers and sisters** – I'm consistently frustrated by the ESV translating everything 'brothers' when it's actually '**brothers and sisters**' in more of a inclusive and neutral way talking about people. It gives the impression that it's only dudes. Clearly it's not if Lydia is running it. But also, we do see that it's likely that some men were now involved in this short amount of time. This means that they would be under Lydia's household authority too in the fledgling church (would look like a Bible study) in her house.
  - **They encouraged them and left<sup>26</sup>** – the last thing they did was encourage them because **we can do so much more if we are encouraged than if we are discouraged**. Also, **those young Christians just saw both craziness (demon casting); danger (beating and imprisonment); and a miracle (jailbreak)**. You can imagine their eyes were like deer in the headlights. Paul's team spent a moment encouraging them and then they set out to do more ministry.

## Conclusion

- **Bold and Sensitive to the Spirit**
  - **Prayer for Boldness**

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<sup>25</sup> "The Western text reads: "And having arrived with many friends at the prison, they begged them to depart, saying, 'We did not know the truth about you, that you were righteous men.' And having led them out, they begged them, saying, 'Depart from this city, lest perchance they come to us in a body again, crying out against you.' ... Roman citizens who had been convicted of no crime could not be *expelled* from a Roman city, but the responsibility of protecting two unpopular Roman citizens was more than the praetors felt able to undertake. They therefore apologized to Paul and Silas and escorted them out of the prison precincts, asking them to be good enough not to remain in Philippi any longer." NICNT

<sup>26</sup> "Then Paul and Silas, with Timothy, departed from Philippi in the westward direction along the Egnatian Way. Luke perhaps stayed behind; at any rate he reappears in Philippi in 20:5-6, at the beginning of the second "we" section of Acts. He is possibly the "true yokel fellow" to whom Paul addresses a special request in Phil. 4:3." NICNT