

Acts 16:6-40

- I. 16:6-10 The Macedonian Call
- II. 16:11-15 Arrival in Philippi
- III. 16:16-24 The Arrest of Paul and Silas
- IV. 16:25-34 The Jailer Believes
- V. 16:35-40 The Release of Paul and Silas

I. 16:6-10 The Macedonian Call

- A. 16:6-7 The Holy Spirit says not to go here. Asia was the location of Ephesus. Paul went there eventually, but the Holy Spirit was the one who set the time.
- B. 16:8 *Troas* is the city we know as Troy, the home of the Trojans.
- C. 16:9 *Macedonia* is the northern part of Greece.
- D. 16:10 *we* in this verse. Before this it was *they*. This is where Luke joins the team. Some have concluded because of this that Luke was the man in Paul's vision. Maybe so.

II. 16:11-15 Arrival in Philippi

- A. 16:12 The name *Philippi* comes from Philip, the father of Alexander the Great.
 - i. The city was a *colony*, meaning that the citizens of Philippi were automatically citizens of Rome – much as our US Territories today: Guam, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands.
 - ii. Note that it was the foremost city of that part of Macedonia.
 - a) We'll notice a pattern with evangelism in Acts – that the primary focus is on the cities. That's where the people are. That's where the cultural influence is. The Gospel eventually had a huge impact on the Roman empire by means of reaching people in the cities.
 - b) The word *pagan* comes from the Latin *paganus*, meaning *country-dweller*, from *pagus*, meaning *country, rural district*. (American Heritage Dictionary)
 - We at Horizon Central are following a solid NT pattern by being a city church.
- B. 16:13 *riverside ... prayer ... women* Normally Paul and Silas would have gone to a synagogue, but there apparently wasn't one in Philippi. This is confirmed by the fact that at the riverside they spoke to a group of women. It takes ten adult, circumcised, Jewish men to form a synagogue. In Philippi a group of women gathered outside the city to pray.
- C. 16:14 *Thyatira* was a city in Asia Minor. Inscriptions show that Thyatira had a guild of dyers. The city was famous for its purple dyes (Homer, *Iliad*, IV. 141).

III. 16:16-24 The Arrest of Paul and Silas

A. 16:16 *a slave girl* This girl had at least two serious problems:

i. She was possessed “held, owned” by a spirit of divination, “spirit of Python”. The Nelson Study Bible has a useful note at this point:

a) *Luke’s description of the **slave girl** in Greek indicates that she had a “spirit of Python.” The python was a mythical serpent killed by Apollo, who took both the serpent’s gift of predictions and sometimes its form. Apollo became known as Pythian Apollo. When it was said that one had a “spirit of Python,” it meant that the person was controlled by an evil force. Apparently those who knew the girl did not regard her as insane or fraudulent. Rather they viewed her ability to foretell events as genuine.*

ii. She was being exploited by her masters. They made “much profit” from her evil spirit.

B. 16:17 Demons know how to tell the truth when it serves their purposes. Why would she say things like this about Paul and Silas?

i. It was greatly annoying Paul. She wasn't simply telling the truth. She was following them for days crying out (literally “croaking” or “squawking – like a raven”).

ii. It would create a troublesome connection for any new converts. People in Philippi knew the girl – and enough people believed in her abilities that she made her masters a lot of money. Now, knowing immediately that he has met his match, the demon decides to join the church before it can ever get started. No (potential) new convert will ever have enough discernment to know that she and Jesus have absolutely nothing in common.
Result: Serious Confusion

C. 16:19 The girl has just been delivered from the merciless grip of a demon and rather than rejoice, her masters are furious.

i. This much is clear: It was all about profit. The girl was only valuable to her masters for the money she brought in to them. It was a complete prostitute-pimp relationship.

- CIA estimates that 14,500 – 17,500 are brought into the US as slaves annually. (Source [iAbolish.org](http://Abolish.org) See also: [US State Dept 2004 Report](#))
- Tangent: I remember reading somewhere that Playboy playmates are extraordinarily likely to die young, often as a result of suicide. (I would have researched this, but I was afraid of what might come up on a search.)

ii. With their income gone, they decide to take it all out on Paul and Silas.

D. 16:20-21 Paul and Silas get in trouble with civil officials for being Jews and preaching a Jewish Messiah. Think back to Paul's first missionary trip. He can't win.

Acts 14:18-19 (NKJV) Then Jews from Antioch and Iconium came there; and having persuaded the multitudes, they stoned Paul and dragged him out of the city, supposing him to be dead.

IV. 16:25-34 The Jailer Believes

- A. 16:25 They've just been beaten with rods, put into the *inner prison* and had their feet put into stocks. Paul and Silas respond with prayer and singing.
- B. 16:27 *was about to kill himself* Why was he so distraught? Think back:

*Acts 12:18-19 (NKJV) ¹⁸Then, as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers about what had become of Peter. ¹⁹But when Herod had searched for him and not found him, he examined the guards and **commanded that they should be put to death.***

In those days, if a prisoner escaped, the normal punishment for the guard was whatever the punishment would have been for the prisoner. In this case the guard thought the whole prison had emptied out.

- C. God had a plan in putting his servants in prison. They needed to be there so that the jailer and his family could hear about Jesus.
- i. 16:31 The emphasis is on salvation by faith. There is a sentence put together that articulates the basics of the Christian faith as defined during the time of the reformation:
- ii. There are five “alones” that sum up the biblical concept of salvation.

“We are saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone as revealed in Scripture alone to the glory of God alone.”

That quickly summarizes what the apostles taught.

- iii. 16:33 The jailer is transformed. The same man who put them in the inner prison and put their feet in stocks is now washing their stripes. He's showing compassion on Paul and Silas, because God has saved him.

V. 16:35-40 The Release of Paul and Silas

- A. 16:37-38 Not all Jews had Roman citizenship, but Paul and Silas did. In the Roman colony of Philippi, this entitled them to a fair trial, which they never got. Now the magistrates (civil officials) are afraid.

Summary of Lessons:

- Let the Holy Spirit direct both your starts and stops – where to go and where not to go.
- God loves people, therefore God loves to have us reach out in cities, which are full of them.
- Demons know how to tell the truth – when it serves their wicked purposes.
- Jesus delivers people from bondage – and upsets those who are in the habit of taking advantage of others.
- You can get in trouble for doing the right thing. Just be sure to respond with grace and thanks.
- God saves us from death and transforms those who put their faith in Jesus.
- It's OK to exercise your political rights – like Paul and Silas, who were Romans.