

ACTS 16:13-25

A. Paul's first convert in Europe:

Acts 16:13-15 - 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*. 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. 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.

1. In these verses, Paul and his team go out on the sabbath. Remember, at this time, Paul would go to the synagogues (Jews **first**) to reason the scriptures with them. The Jews will not be left without a witness in Israel and the other nations where they were. The team goes outside the city where a prayer meeting was being held.

2. The question is, why outside the city?

Acts 18:2 - And found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:) and came unto them. (Corinth)

*Philippi, being a Roman colony, had all the same laws as Rome. So these Jews were **not** free to pray in town openly. However, they met openly outside the city, next to the river, to pray. Paul and his team began to witness to some **women** and share Paul's new gospel of grace.

3. One of these women who heard Paul's message was named Lydia. She was from Thyatira and was a merchant/seller of **purple** cloth. As a business lady, no doubt she sold to wealthy citizens. Thyatira was known for its dyer's guild. Purple was a sign of **royalty**, so Lydia had to have means and influence.
4. Lydia worshipped God. Evidently she was not Jewish but had come to fear the God of Israel, or had converted to Judaism. However, at this time, one needed to believe in the **grace** gospel to be saved.
 - a. *A great lesson here shows that unless the **Lord** opens one's heart, it doesn't open. In other words, man left to his own sinful nature will keep his heart closed to the light of the gospel. The way God opened Lydia's heart was through the **Word** she heard from Paul's message (vs. 10).

II Corinthians 4:3-4, 6 - But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 2Cor. 4:4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. 2Co 4:6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

- b. We need to always remember that we can preach the Word of God to some all day long, but it is **God** Who opens their heart! We need to learn that, of **ourselves**, we cannot get results. If it is a true conversion, it has to be of God - no matter how much guilt or how many tears we force them to have.
5. In verse 15, Lydia and her household were baptized. This is the **first** mention of baptism under Paul's ministry. There are several more in Acts. Why?

- a. Lydia was baptized for the **same** reason that Timothy was circumcised in verse 3, or like the Philippian jailer and family are later in this chapter (verse 33). Israel is still in the diminishing stage and several of Israel's programs and ceremonies were still prevalent. In this chapter alone, we see visions, circumcision, baptism, casting out of spirits, and an earthquake to deliver Paul. So you must not pick and choose everything in this chapter as being for **today**.
- b. All these things are connected with Israel-Jews. Paul, though he was circumcised and spoke in tongues (languages) more than anyone, later shows they were **not part** of his commission for this age. They (supernatural experiences-gifts) would pass away, go off the scene, when the scriptures would be **completed**. Paul had **not** written his first book yet!

I Corinthians 13:8-10 - Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away. 1Cor. 13:9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. 1Cor. 13:10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

II Corinthians 5:7 - (For we walk by faith, not by sight:)

- c. Likewise, at the early stages of Paul's ministry, he also baptized some. But water baptism was **not** to be a part of his commission.

6. Note the difference:

- a. Old: Matthew 28:19-20 - Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Matt. 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.
 - Acts 2:38 - Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.
 - Acts 10:47 - Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?
- b. Paul's: I Corinthians 1:17-18 - For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. 1Cor. 1:18 For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God.

Ephesians 4:4-5 - There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; Eph. 4:5 One Lord, one faith, one baptism,

I Corinthians 12:13 - For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Romans 6:3 - Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

- *| So here, after one was saved, baptism was added because Israel was **not** off the scene. She was
- *| still diminishing and God was still working with her.

- c. Remember, part of Paul's early ministry was to **provoke** Israel.

Romans 11:11, 14 - I say then, Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but *rather through their fall salvation is come* unto the Gentiles, for to provoke them to jealousy. Rom. 11:14 If by any means I may provoke to emulation them which are my flesh, and might save some of them.

* So Paul used his liberty to baptize some people - **where** baptism's place had meaning. This allowed them to not be offensive to Jewish people. Who were Lydia's clients? No doubt, **some were Jews!**

7. In verse 15, Lydia invites Paul and his team to have use of her home. In overcoming their reluctance, she challenges them to **trust** her conversion and her heart (Eph. 2:10). **We** are some of the fruit of this humble meeting, nineteen hundred years later!

B. The encounter with the forces of darkness:

Acts 16:16-24 - 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: 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. 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. 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, Acts 16:20 And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, Acts 16:21 And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans. Acts 16:22 And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat *them*. Acts 16:23 And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast *them* into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: Acts 16:24 Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.

1. Satan is always active wherever the true gospel is being preached. On this occasion, he uses a young girl who was under the control of one of his spirits - a prophetic **demon** (soothsayer/fortune-teller - could figure out some future things).

*Here there are some spirits and wicked masters who are going to attack Paul by **trying** to trick him.

2. This demonic-controlled girl was making her masters a **lot** of money by fortune-telling. Satan's strategy was to have this girl stay close to Paul and his team and to "**cry out**" that Paul and his team were of **God**.
- a. ** What this girl said was true. She kept this up for days. But Paul had discerned that she had a **demonic** spirit and knew it was a trick to undermine his ministry. Satan was trying to get Paul to be in an **alliance** with his way. "We are talking about the same God, come on and join with us!" - as if they were a part of Paul's team! Today?
- b. In verse 18, it says Paul was grieved about this, so **he** commanded the spirit to come out of her in Christ's name and the demon left her. She had made the people to think that she was one of Paul's followers, but she was a counterfeit. She/they were in it for the **money** (TV preachers, churches, ministries).

3. Now, since this girl could not practice soothsaying/fortune-telling, her masters saw the source of their income was gone. So they took action in verses 19-21 against Paul and Silas.
 - a. They dragged them to the market place before the magistrates and told them that Paul and Silas were nothing but trouble-making Jews and custom lawbreakers. The crowd in verse 22 turned into a mob, wanting satisfaction. Paul and Silas were stripped, beaten-flogged, and then thrown into the inner part of the prison, with their feet in stocks. Paul did not even have a hearing!
 - b. Interestingly, even though spirit possession and the casting out of demons are in the gospels and Acts, we find no mention of these in the epistles of Paul.

- (1) Note: There are many today who seek to go back to Pentecost, instead of going on unto perfection-maturity with Paul. They often make claims of demon expulsions.
- (2) Under the Jewish program and the great commission to the apostles (11-12), power was given to them to cast out devils and perform miracles.

Mark 16:17-18, 20 - And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; Mark 16:18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. Mark 16:20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

*In agreement with the passing away of miraculous powers under Paul's ministry, shouldn't the casting out of demons also have vanished away? Nowhere is the believer today given such power.

- (3) It is in Paul's epistles that we learn that the cross spelled the defeat of Satan.

Hebrews 2:14-15 - Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; Heb. 2:15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

Colossians 2:15 - And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.

Today It Is: Ephesians 6:10, 12 - Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Eph. 6:12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

4. This whole incident was wrong or improper, having as its basis the masters of this girl using false charges and without a hearing. This, evidently, was one of the 5 times that Paul endured being beaten with stripes, with rods.
 - a. *Flogging by the Jews was limited to 39 times.

II Corinthians 11:24 - Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one.

- b. The stripes here given to Paul and Silas may have well exceeded that number because Paul says in II Cor. 11:23 [stripes above measure].

5. After being put into prison, the jailer having responsibility for these prisoners [thrust them into the inner prison]. This jailer was rough with them.

**History states that the [inner] prisons were dungeons below the ground level. They were damp and filthy.

- a. *To add more torture, their feet were put in [stocks]. This made it difficult to sit up and made them to lie on their backs. (Remember the stripes and the condition of their backs - to lie on the damp, filthy ground.)
- b. Paul briefly mentions this event in I Thessalonians 2:2 - [But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention.]

6. Being a Roman citizen, why didn't they make this known? Likely they were allowing these magistrates to violate Roman law by not giving Paul and Silas a hearing. As a Roman citizen, they had that right. That put these magistrates in the wrong and it will be brought to light and place them on the defense a little while later.

*This wrong would eventually be used by Paul to set him and Silas free.

**In my mind, I have always wondered, when the earthquake took place and the prison doors were opened/chains loosed, why didn't they flee? Did Paul have a plan?

7. I wonder how we would respond to these kinds of circumstances?

Note:

Acts 16:25 - And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.

- a. From within that damp dungeon, a strange sound began to be heard. It wasn't the normal cursing and vile outburst. But the sound was soothing, comforting and uplifting. Godly songs and prayers began to fill the air, with all of the prison's inhabitants listening intently - including the Philippian jailer who was in charge of all prisoners. What a testimony!
- b. As Paul and Silas prayed and sang, their faith soars into the praising of God.

*As they sang and praised God, it is as if God was confirming that their message and faith were real to all the listeners. And He was!

8. Note: Midnight is not usually the best time to have a worship service.

- a. Job 35:10 - But none saith, Where is God my maker, who giveth songs in the night;

Psalms 42:8 - Yet the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.

- b. Spurgeon said: "Any fool can sing in the day. It is easier to sing when we 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."

- c. Paul said in Ephesians 5:18-19 - [And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Eph. 5:19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;]