

## THE LIFE OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

### AT PHILIPPI (PART 1): ACTS 16:11-24

- A. Arrival in Philippi (11-12), *So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, 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.*
1. The team went from Troas to Philippi.
    - a. It is about 125 miles from Troas to Philippi.
    - b. They went by boat to Samothrace which is an island midway between Troas and Neapolis.
    - c. Neapolis was the port city for Philippi.
    - d. Philippi
      - 1) It was a Roman colony.
        - a) A Roman colony was inhabited by Roman citizens and Roman sympathizers.
        - b) The purpose was to provide security for the Roman Empire in strategic areas.
        - c) Many retired Roman military lived in Roman colonies.
      - 2) It provide all the benefits citizens enjoyed in Rome.
        - a) There was freedom from scourging.
        - b) Freedom from arrest except in extreme cases.
        - c) The right to appeal to the emperor.
      - 3) It was a city with few Jews.
        - a) There were no synagogues there.
        - b) There was prejudice against Jews in such a Roman city. Jews had been expelled from Rome.
  2. They stayed there for several days.
    - a. Luke was not referring to the time they stayed in Philippi.
    - b. Actually, Paul and his team members spent several days getting acclimated to the city.
      - 1) There was no synagogue where they could start evangelizing (10 Jewish males were required for a synagogue).
      - 2) They spent time looking for a place where Jews met.
- B. The conversion of Lydia (13-15)
1. They went to the riverside and spoke to women who were gathered there (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.*
    - a. They found a place where women gathered to pray on the Sabbath.
    - b. According to Josephus, it was customary for Jews and Gentile God-fearers to meet in the open air by a river or the sea when a synagogue was not available.
    - c. Paul and his team sat down and spoke to the women of Jesus the Messiah.
  2. Lydia's heart was opened by God to understand what Paul had to say (14-15), *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. 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.*
    - a. The heart of Lydia was opened by God to Paul's message.
      - 1) She was from Thyatira in the province of Asia, famous for its purple dye and cloth.
        - a) She was a seller of purple goods.
        - b) R. Lenski, *The dye itself was so costly because only a drop of it was secured from a small vessel in the throat of each shellfish. This was the genuine article; a cheaper grade was secured by crushing the fish.*

- 2) She was a worshiper of God who came to faith.
    - a) God-worshiper was a term used for Gentiles who were not converts to Judaism but did worship Yahweh, the God of Israel.
    - b) It is probable that other women there were Jewish.
    - c) Her conversion was a result of God opening her heart to the Gospel message.
    - d) A woman was the first convert to Christianity in Europe.
  - b. She and her household were baptized.
    - 1) Her household probably included family and servants.
    - 2) It took place shortly after conversion.
    - 3) All who were baptized responded by faith to the message of the Gospel.
      - a) Lydia did not make that decision for the others.
      - b) Note the jailer and his family in Acts 16:32, *And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.*
      - c) Christianity is not a group religion but personal faith in Christ alone.
  - c. She insisted that Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke stay in her house.
    - 1) Lydia must have had a home large enough for her household as well as Paul's four-member team.
    - 2) It was a very hospitable offer since public housing was scarce.
    - 3) She encouraged Paul to accept her invitation as proof that her commitment to Christ was sincere.
  - d. Merrill Unger, *The church...from the beginning welcomed women, commended them, liberated them socially and spiritually, and granted them privileges of service and ministry they had never enjoyed before.*
- C. The deliverance of the fortune-teller (16-18)
1. They met a young fortune-teller on the way to the place of prayer (16-17), *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. She followed Paul and us, crying out, "These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation."*
    - a. The team came across a demon-possessed girl on the way to prayer.
      - 1) She seemingly had the ability to foretell future events.
      - 2) The Greek word for divination is *one possessed by a python*.
      - 3) Kenneth Gangel, *The python, a mythical serpent of the Greeks, guarded the temple of Apollo. By A.D. 50, they used the word python to describe a possessed person through whom the python gave prophecy. Pagan generals would commonly consult people with a "pythian spirit" before marching off to war.*
      - 4) Her owners made a lot of money off her fortune-telling.
    - b. She cried out that they were servants of the Most High God.
      - 1) The girl was speaking what was told her by the demon that possessed her.
      - 2) Demons know God and who are His followers.
      - 3) Mark 3:11, *And whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God."*
      - 4) She even declared that their purpose was to give the way of salvation (not a way but the way).
  2. Paul commanded the evil spirit to come out of her (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.*
    - a. She continued to cry out the message that these men were from God with a message from God.
    - b. Why would Paul be annoyed?
      - 1) It is not a good thing to seemingly be aligned with a demon in a region that never heard the message.
      - 2) Also, it had to detract from the message. Many probably heard to demon-possessed girl but not Paul.
      - 3) Merrill Unger, *This episode at Philippi was in reality a head-on collision of gospel light with pagan darkness, of the power of truth with error.*

- c. Paul commanded the demon to come out of the girl.
    - 1) He made the command in the name of Jesus Christ and through His direction, as well.
    - 2) Richard Lenski, *Miracles are never wrought at the discretion of the human agent. They are in every instance wrought only by the will of the Lord. Paul had no directions from the Lord or his Spirit to act during those "many days," and that is why he did not, in fact, could not act. At last the divine directions came to him.*
- D. The imprisonment of Paul and Silas (19-24)
- 1. They were dragged by the owners of the slave-girl to the rulers of the city (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.***
    - a. The owners of the slave-girl seized Paul and Silas.
      - 1) They feared they had lost their money-making venture.
      - 2) Note Demetrius in Acts 19:23-27 and the pig herdsman in Luke 8:33-37.
      - 3) William Barclay, *Often, if not always, the greatest obstacle to the crusade of Christ is the selfishness of men.*
    - b. Paul and Silas were dragged before the rulers.
      - 1) Each Roman colony was governed by two leaders.
      - 2) John Polhill, *They were the enforcement officers.*
  - 2. They accused Paul and Silas unlawful activity (20-21), ***And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, "These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice."***
    - a. The owners of the slave-girl did not give the real reason for accusing Paul and Silas.
    - b. They made two claims.
      - 1) Paul and Silas were Jews (Jews had been thrown out of Rome and probably Philippi).
      - 2) They were accused of disturbing the city (agitating or throwing into confusion) by promoting activities not acceptable for Romans.
        - a) Rome did not permit Roman citizens to be proselytized.
        - b) Christianity was not an accepted religion of Rome.
        - c) Therefore, it was promoted that Paul and Silas were disturbing peace (Pax Romana).
    - c. Timothy and Luke may not have been arrested because they were Gentiles not Jews.
  - 3. The crowd joined in the attack and the magistrates had them beaten and thrown into prison (22-24), ***The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.***
    - a. A crowd developed and took sides with the owners of the slave-girl.
      - 1) The mention of Jews probably aroused many in the crowd since so many were retired Roman soldiers.
      - 2) The focus of their complaint was not loss of personal gain but disturbing the peace of their community.
    - b. The magistrates had Paul and Silas beaten and thrown into prison.
      - 1) It must have seemed obvious that Paul and Silas were guilty based on what had been said.
      - 2) It was illegal for Paul and Silas to be beaten since they were Roman citizens.
      - 3) Their Roman citizenship was not made known until later. Possibly, that was because of how quickly mob justice took control.
      - 4) They were securely bound in the inner prison where dangerous criminals were kept.
        - a) The jailer was reminded of his responsibility to make sure they were his responsibility.
        - b) The jailer's primary concern was his well-being, not that of Paul and Silas.

<b>CONCLUSION</b>
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- A. Paul's first convert in Europe was a woman.
- B. The message of the Gospel had a successful confrontation with demonic forces.
- C. Good news can bring a bad report.

