

Acts Chapter Sixteen

Acts 16:1-3

And he came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek, and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium. 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.

- William Barclay believes first missionary journey took place 5 years prior.
- Last time Paul was in Lystra—they attempted to worship him as a god before attempting to stone him.
- Timothy was Jewish—had a Jewish mother and a Greek father (being a Jew was determined through the mother—since you could never be sure who the father was—but always who the mother was). Since he was Jewish, yet uncircumcised, he was considered apostate.
- First place that Paul would go as he entered a city—a synagogue. This is the reason he circumcised Timothy—so they could freely move among the Jews without a barrier. This was not required for salvation—just easier access to advance the mission—I Cor 9:12, 19-23
- Paul does this for love—not to try to please God through legalism.
- Opposite takes place with Titus—a gentile—Gal 2:1-5
- Wording sounds like Paul did this himself.

Acts 16:4-8

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. So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.

And they passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; and when they had come to Mysia, they were trying to go

into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them; and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.

- Second journey—intent is to visit and encourage the churches previously planted.
- Travel covers around 200 hundred miles. On foot—this would take 2-3 weeks.
- Holy Spirit has them on a very precise mission—what/where they purposed was halted by H.S.
- Forbidden to speak the word in Asia (the Roman province which occupied the western end of Turkey)—they would have been headed to Ephesus—chief city in province of Asia.
- Discerning a closed door: word of prophecy? Inward speaking? Circumstances?
- They kept going—moving past where they had ministered previously.
- When they had come to Mysia—try to go into Bithynia—this is next region beyond Phrygia and Galatia.
- Paul thought when he was forbidden to go south—he would go north—door closed to both. They had come from the east—so only direction is west to Troas—beyond that lies Europe. Troas is on the coast in the Province of Asia (not to preach there). They had thought they would be developing the work in Galatia/Turkey.
- Continued forward movement—into unknown territory—brings them to Troas—where they hear. Sometimes unknown places are for hearing—not doing.

Acts 16:9-13

And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a certain man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." And 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.

Therefore putting out to sea from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and on the day following to Neapolis; 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. 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.

- Troas is where they find Luke. The author inserts himself into the story at this point. Because God closed two other doors they arrive here and find another partner (and so we have a gospel and the Book of Acts).
- Vision: a man saying--come to Macedonia and help us—come into Greece. They will now cross one of the great frontiers of the ancient world.
- Ran a straight course—meant the wind was at their back and they covered 156 miles in two days. In Acts 20:6—it takes 5 days.
- Philippi—Roman colony where the governor lived. This is the place where the armies of Mark Anthony and Octavian defeated Brutus and Cassius in 2nd Roman civil war in 42BC.
- After a few days rest—they seek the place where the spiritual seekers might be gathered to pray. They must have heard that the few Jews who were here met by river to pray.
- There was probably no synagogue in Philippi. There needs to be 10 Jewish men in a location to establish a synagogue. (might be like Timothy's family—Jewish women with Greek husbands).
- This will be the first church in Europe.

Acts 16:14-15

And a certain 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. 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.

- Lydia was a God-fearer—not Jewish. She was a business woman—dealing in purple cloth—making her a wealthy business woman.
- She came from Thyatira—known for purple fabric—one of 7 churches mentioned in Revelation.

- Perhaps it was due to Lydia's prayers that God directed the missionaries who were waiting in Troas.
- Most important element for evangelism is prayer—asking the Lord to open hearts (John 6:44).
- God opened her heart to believe—she will be the first convert to Christ in Europe.

Acts 16:16-21

And it happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a certain slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortunetelling. 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." And 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.

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, and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, "These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews, and are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans."

- Now we begin to see how the spiritual forces of wickedness are stirred up against the group.
- Ancient Greek world knew about divination—people often went to places like Delphi to consult oracles for advice.
- Girl is functioning by what the spiritual forces within her are discerning (Jesus had same thing happen when demons were exposed to Him).
- Divination=Pythona=a snake; python associated with Apollo—there was a shrine to Pythian Apollo found nearby.
- The hearers would assume she was announcing messengers from Zeus—wrong kind of publicity.
- Jesus used his own authority to cast our demons—Paul uses His authority as well.
- Her masters—occult pimps who exploited her.

- As deliverance opposes a means of profit—a second confrontation takes place (conflict between economy of the Kingdom and the economy of the world). This is what happens when two kingdoms come into same territory.
- Third conflict—with religious and political prejudices.
- In Roman Empire—legal matters differ for citizens and non citizens.

Acts 16:22-24

And 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. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison, and fastened their feet in the stocks.

- Roman citizens assumed that these Jews were peddling trouble in their city.
- After being severely beaten—they are placed in maximum security conditions (II Cor 11:23).

Acts 16:25-30

But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; 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. And when the jailer had been roused out of sleep and had seen the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here!" And he called for lights and rushed in and, trembling with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas, and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

- Paul and Silas—filled with joy—sing praises
- Supernatural earthquake

- It would have been easy for Paul to assume this was another supernatural jailbreak—and left accordingly. Circumstances said escape—discernment had him stay for sake of the one soul.
- Under Roman law—if a guard allowed a prisoner to escape—they suffered the penalty due their escaped prisoners.
- This may be the same guard that had beaten him hours earlier.
- What must I do to be saved?—the question all must answer—Phil 2:10, Rom 10:9

Acts 16:31-34

And they said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household.” And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. And he took them that *very* hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his *household*. And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household.

- Paul gives him the essence of the gospel
- Paul does not call jailer to repent—because he is already doing that.
- And your household—they are given the opportunity to respond as well—not just saved automatically.
- There is a lot of activity between midnight and dawn.

Acts 16:35-40

Now when day came, the chief magistrates sent their policemen, saying, “Release those men.” And the jailer reported these words to Paul, *saying*, “The chief magistrates have sent to release you. Now therefore, come out and go in peace.” 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.” And the policemen reported these words to the chief magistrates. And they were afraid when they heard that they were Romans, and they came and appealed to them, and when they had brought

them out, they kept begging them to leave the city. And they went out of the prison and entered *the house of Lydia*, and when they saw the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.

- God did not send earthquake to free apostles—but to bring freedom to Philippian jailer.
- When departing—they do not hurry out of town—but return to Lydia's before departing.
- When brethren depart—sentence uses word 'they'—so perhaps Luke stays to build up the church.
- Apostles leave behind two notable converts: Lydia and her household and Philippian jailer and his household.

Acts Chapter Sixteen—Workbook

Key Words:

Harmonize:

Read the Book of Philippians

Dig:

- 1) What happened in Derbe and Lystra last time he was here?
- 2) Why does Paul circumcise Timothy?
- 3) Is Paul's action in vs 3 in conflict with his message in vs 4?
- 4) Where was the door closed to Paul/Silas/Timothy on this missionary journey?
- 5) What significant change takes place in vs 10?
- 6) When they go to Philippi—where do they find people gathered? What is different about their initial ministry in this city from prior opportunities?
- 7) Who was the first convert in Europe?
- 8) Why would the response of the slave girl be annoying?
- 9) What kind of government was Philippi under? Would there be anything in the gospel that is in conflict with Roman law?

10) Which verse describes the basis for salvation?

11) What did Paul demonstrate in Philippi that he will later teach them in chapter 4 of the epistle to the Philippians?

Discuss:

- 1) How do you recognize an "open door" or a "closed door" from the Holy Spirit?
- 2) Is there anything in the gospel message today that is in conflict with the laws of our land?
- 3) How has your life as a Christian impacted you financially? How does it contribute to your financial decisions?

Point of Prayer:

Pray for a family you know that has no known Christians in their immediate family.

Integrate:

What other scriptures come to mind as you read this chapter?

Application:

- 1) Do you have anyone you are currently discipling?
- 2) Has the Lord shut any 'doors' for you that you wanted to see open?

- 3) Is there a Christian song you sing/listen to in order to encourage yourself?
- 4) Has the Lord ever supernaturally helped you through or out of a situation?
- 5) When have you personally seen suffering lead to a spiritual opportunity?
- 6) What do you consider some of the greatest advantages of being an American citizen?
- 7) What would have been the most encouraging part of this ministry time in Philippi? The most discouraging?
- 8) What do you do when you are encouraged? What do you do when you are discouraged?