

1. **Introduction:** In Paul’s time, Philippi was an important city in the Roman province of Macedonia. It was located about 10 miles inland from the port city of Neapolis.
  - It began as a Greek village. It was fortified and renamed Philippi by Alexander the Great's father, Philip of Macedon. Philippi was on the Via Egnatia, an important east-west Roman road. The city and region were conquered by Rome in 168 BC.
  - After Julius Caesar was killed by Cassius and Brutus on March 15, 44 BC, Antony and Octavian joined forces against the killers and defeated them in a battle at Philippi in 42 BC. Cassius and Brutus both committed suicide.
  - Later, Octavian defeated Anthony in the naval battle of Actium in 31 BC. Anthony fled to Cleopatra in Egypt. A second battle was fought at Alexandria in 30 BC in which Anthony was defeated. Both Anthony and Cleopatra committed suicide.
  - Octavian became the first Emperor of Rome in 27 BC as Augustus.
  - In 31 BC, Emperor Augustus moved a large group of his Roman Army veterans to Philippi and granted the city special status as a Roman colony providing Roman citizenship to the soldiers and their families.
  - Daily life in Philippi was Romanized by the influx of the retired Roman legionnaires. Roman law replaced Greek law, and Latin was imposed as the official language.
  - In 50 AD, Paul, Silas, and Barnabas attended the Jerusalem Council of Apostles and elders where several decisions were made that affected Gentile converts.
  - Afterwards, they went to Antioch. Paul proposed visiting the areas where they established churches on the first missionary journey.
  - Barnabas and Mark disagreed about who should be included in the team. Barnabas and Mark set out for Cyprus while Paul and Silas traveled west through Tarsus toward Lystra via Derbe (Acts 15:36-41). (see map)
  - Derbe was a place where Paul had great success on his first missionary journey (Acts 14:20-21). They went on to Lystra, where on the first missionary journey (Acts 14:8-20), a crowd tried to honor Paul and Barnabas as pagan gods
  - This time in Lystra, they encountered Timothy, a disciple of good reputation, whose mother was a Christian and whose father was a Greek. Paul asked Timothy to go with them. He agreed and Paul circumcised him to reduce the negative view of the Jews.
  - They continued moving northwest through the cities. They informed each church of the results of the Jerusalem Council. The churches were strengthened in the faith both by the Word preached and the new information from the Council.
2. **Acts 16:6-10:** *And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia. <sup>7</sup> And when they had come up to Mysia, they attempted to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them. <sup>8</sup> So, passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. <sup>9</sup> And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, “Come over to Macedonia*

*and help us.”<sup>10</sup> And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.*

- Paul, Silas, and Timothy were guided by the Holy Spirit through hinderance of their original plan. Apparently, they intended to go southwest to Ephesus. The time for Ephesus was not yet but its turn would come.
- They then attempted to go north-east into Bithynia, but the Spirit redirected them along the northern border of Asia and down through Mysia to the port city of Troas. At Troas they were joined by Luke.
- While in Troas, Paul experienced a vision in which a Macedonian man urged him to come to Macedonia and help them. They immediately set out to do what they were urged to do.

3. ***Acts 16:11-12:*** *So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis,<sup>12</sup> 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.*

- Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke traveled by ship from Troas (in Asia) to Samothrace to Neapolis (in Europe) and then overland by the Via Egnatia, west to Philippi.
- At that time (50-51 AD), Philippi was a pagan Gentile city of Romans and Greeks with very few Jews, apparently not enough Jewish men to form a Synagogue.

4. ***Acts 16:13-15:*** *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.<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup> 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.*

- Lydia was a seller of purple, a valued, luxurious product. The dyes used for making purple were expensive and highly regarded.
- Lydia was from the city of Thyatira which was a well-known center for the purple dye and fabric made using it. Later, a church was founded in Thyatira. It was one of the seven churches addressed in Revelation (Revelation 2:18-29).
- As invited by Lydia, Paul and his team made their Philippi headquarters at her home.
- Since there was no Synagogue in Philippi, Paul and his team regularly went to a place of prayer by the river. They attracted attention.

5. ***Acts 16:16-17:*** *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.<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.”*

- The team encountered a demon-possessed slave girl who had a spirit of divination. The girl brought her owners much profit through fortune-telling. I assume she was a good fortune teller because her demon provided supernatural insight.
  - The girl followed the team and correctly identified them as ***“servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.”***
6. ***Acts 16:18:*** ***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.***
- Paul was annoyed at this demonic approval of his work. So, he said to the spirit, ***“I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.”*** The spirit immediately left her. With the spirit gone, her ability for accurate fortune-telling was gone. Her owners reacted.
7. ***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 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.***
- The owners were very angry. They cared nothing for the girl, only for her value as a fortune teller. Paul and Silas were Jews and visibly so. Timothy was half Jew but didn’t look it. Luke was a Gentile. The result was that the ire of the owners was directed at Paul and Silas.
  - Paul and Silas were brought to the magistrates and accused of being Jews disturbing the peace by advocating unlawful customs for Romans to accept or practice.
  - The charges were vague but sufficient because the multitude and the magistrates were biased by the men’s Jewish appearance and because they wrongly assumed Paul and Silas were not Roman citizens.
  - The Roman Empire had two very different sets of laws: one for Roman citizens, the other for non-citizens. Citizens had specific civil rights. Non-citizens had no civil rights and were subject to the whims of both crowds and magistrates.
  - Paul and Silas were assumed to be non-citizens. The crowd and magistrates were offended and felt free to abuse these obviously Jewish non-citizens who harassed Roman citizens.
  - Paul and Silas were beaten with rods with the crowd joining in. After many blows, they were thrown into jail and the jailer instructed to keep them secure. Their feet were put into stocks.

8. **Acts 16:25-29**: *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, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. 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.*

- Though arrested, beaten, and imprisoned for doing good, Paul and Silas were filled with joy, and sang praises to God. Real joy comes from a satisfied heart. Rather than the seemingly natural cursing of their abusers, they blessed God. The other prisoners listened!
- Suddenly there was an earthquake, a clearly supernatural event - all the doors were opened, and everyone's chains were loosed. Believing the prisoners had escaped, the jailer knew Roman law would result in the death penalty for him. He prepared to commit suicide.
- Paul yelled to him telling him that all the prisoners were still there. The jailer rushed in with lights and fell trembling before Paul and Silas.

9. **Acts 16:30-34**: *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 and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.*

- The jailer awed by what had happened asked, "*what must I do to be saved?*" The answer to him was the same as the answer for all who ask. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved. Salvation by grace alone, received by faith alone.
- That the jailer is already repenting is seen in his falling down before Paul and Silas. He is told that not only would he be saved by believing in Jesus, but his household would be saved in the same way.
- The jailer's salvation did not cause his household to be saved; Paul spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. They were all saved because they believed.
- The jailer cared for the wounds of Paul and Silas. They went into the jailer's house and he and all his family were baptized. He and his household rejoiced in their salvation.

10. **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.*

- Paul and Silas returned to the jail. The magistrates sent word that they were to be let go. Paul said we are uncondemned Roman citizens, beaten publicly and thrown into prison. Now they want to secretly let us go. No! Not unless they come themselves and let us out.
- When the magistrates heard they were Roman citizens, they were afraid. They came and apologized, took Paul and Silas out of jail, and told them to leave the city. Before leaving, they visited and encouraged Lydia and the brothers, and then departed.
- Paul had a close relationship with Philippi. He returned seven years after his first visit, and then brief visits three more times (April of 57, in spring of 63 and winter of 64).

11. **Next:** Philippians 1.