

Acts of the Apostles – 16

I. The Inspired History

- A. Paul Continues Second Evangelistic Trip (1-5).
 - 1. Paul chooses Timothy to join them (1-3).
 - 2. They deliver the decrees from Jerusalem (4-5).
- B. Philippi of Macedonia – the Lord Directs Paul (6-12).
 - 1. The Spirit keeps them out of Asia and Bithynia (6-7).
 - 2. The Spirit calls them over into Macedonia (8-10).
 - 3. The Spirit leads them to the chief city Philippi (11-12).
- C. Philippi of Macedonia – the Conversion of Lydia (13-15).
- D. Philippi of Macedonia – Persecution for the Gospel (16-24).
 - 1. Paul casts out a spirit of divination (16-18).
 - 2. Slander for financial loss puts Paul in prison (19-24).
- E. Philippi of Macedonia – the Conversion of the Jailor (25-34).
 - 1. The Lord works His own miracle (25-30).
 - 2. Paul presents the gospel in prison (31-34).
- F. Philippi of Macedonia – Paul Departs for Other Places (35-40).
 - 1. He gently punishes the city magistrates (35-39).
 - 2. He comforts the brethren and departs (40).

II. The Sense and Meaning

- A. Paul meets and chooses a young man named Timotheus to join his evangelistic team (1-3).
 - 1. Paul had been at Derbe and Lystra before, on his first trip with Barnabas (14:6-22).
 - 2. His parents were mixed nationally and spiritually: converted Jewess and pagan Greek.
 - 3. Who were Timothy's mother and grandmother? Eunice and Lois (II Timothy 1:5).
 - 4. He had a good reputation, which is a noble goal (Pr 22:1; Lu 2:52; I Ti 5:10; He 11:2).
 - 5. Paul chose him for the ministry, and he became a great one (Phil 2:19-23; I Tim 4:17).
 - 6. To accommodate the Jews in that region and avoid unnecessary offence to Timothy's reputation and ministry, Paul circumcised him. A Greek father had hindered it before.
 - a. Paul did not contradict the council (16:4), but showed wisdom (I Cor 9:19-23).
 - b. When the grace of Christ was at stake, he did not circumcise Titus (Gal 2:1-5).
 - c. Yet once again, when Paul came to Jerusalem, he made a vow (Acts 21:17-26).
 - d. It is godly wisdom to know the proper use of matters of liberty (I Cor 10:23).
- B. Paul, Silas, and Timotheus told the Gentile churches the rules of the Jerusalem Council (4-5).
 - 1. Paul was a minister of the grace of God (15:40; 20:24). Circumcision was excluded.
 - 2. The Gentiles were established in the faith by learning the law did not apply to them.
 - 3. The Gentile churches increased in membership daily by the Spirit and gospel of grace.
 - 4. The "as . . . so" construction of 16:4-5 shows their establishment by the decrees.
- C. Paul is directed by the Holy Spirit to avoid both Asia and Bithynia on this trip (6-7).
 - 1. Paul was an apostle with an extraordinary measure of God's grace and Holy Spirit.
 - 2. The Spirit forbids the preaching of the Word in Asia (southwestern modern Turkey).
 - 3. What happened to all those people who died in Asia without hearing the gospel?
 - 4. The Spirit forbids preaching the Word in Bithynia (northwestern modern Turkey).
 - 5. In between these two Roman provinces was the frontier province of Mysia.
 - 6. The Lord is able to close doors, so that the only open door is His will for your life.
- D. Paul is directed by the Holy Spirit across the modern Aegean Sea to Macedonia (8-10).
 - 1. They passed by Mysia and came down (altitude) to Troas on the Aegean Sea (8).

2. The Holy Spirit directs Paul with an obvious vision of a man of Macedonia, who implored him to cross the Sea and enter into Macedonia and help them of that place.
 3. Godly men react immediately to learning God's will (Psalm 119:60; Gen 22:3; 19:16).
 4. A vision from God is a pretty sure thing, so Paul assuredly gathered God's will.
 5. Here we have the first reference to Luke with Paul by the plural, first person "we."
 - a. Luke met and joined Paul in Troas by comparing "they" (8) with "we" (10).
 - b. Luke was often a companion of Paul (Col 4:14; II Tim 4:11; Philemon 1:24).
- E. Paul is directed by the Holy Ghost to the city of Philippi in the Macedonian province (11-12).
1. Samothracia is an island in the archipelago off the coast of Thrace (modern Greece).
 2. The Holy Spirit leads them to Neapolis, and then to the chief city of Philippi.
 3. The Lord would bless this visit to form a church that later received an epistle.
 4. This city had a Roman presence, as it was considered a colony; the laws were Roman.
 5. They abode in that city a few days waiting for the Lord to open a door (II Cor 2:12).
- F. Lydia is converted with her household after hearing Paul preach at a prayer meeting (13-15).
1. Observe again Paul's sabbath day practice. He waited for God-fearers to assemble.
 2. Paul, Silas, Timotheus, and Luke attend a riverside prayer meeting with some women.
 3. Lydia, a worshiper of God, had her heart opened by the Lord to receive Paul's words.
 - a. This woman was by birth or permanent residence of the city of Thyatira, Asia.
 - b. Her testimony was similar to Cornelius of worshiping God and praying (10:2), yet we know that the unregenerate neither seek or fear God (Rom 3:10-18).
 - c. She was already elect of God, justified by Christ, and regenerated by the Spirit.
 - d. Soft hearts [alive] are pricked (2:37); hard ones [dead] are cut (5:33; 7:51,54).
 - e. Yet God must open the hearts of even regenerated saints (Mat 16:17; Gal 1:16; Ep 1:15-23; Mat 11:25-27; II Tim 2:7; Ps 119:32; Luke 24:45; Acts 11:18,21).
 - f. Lydia needed to be converted – turned to the truth, as Peter was (Luke 22:32).
 4. She and her household were baptized, showing the simplicity of baptism (2:38; 8:37), and there were no infants in this number (8:37; I Peter 3:21).
 5. Appealing to her faith, she requests this group of evangelists to abide in her house.
- G. Paul meets a spirit of divination in a damsel and casts it out to the loss of her masters (16-18).
1. **Divination.** Foretelling the future or discovering the unknown by supernatural means.
 - a. **Soothsaying.** Predicting the future by pretense or supernatural power.
 - b. God condemns such activities, even "innocent" or popular (Deut 18:9-14).
 2. Satan had possessed a young girl by a spirit, which gave her supernatural knowledge.
 - a. The magicians of Pharaoh were able to perform limited signs (Ex 7:11-12).
 - b. Satan's demons always knew Jesus Christ, His apostles, and frauds (19:11-20).
 - c. Her masters had discovered this "gift," and they used it for their financial gain.
 3. They were on their way to prayer, likely praying three times daily (3:1; 10:3,9).
 - a. Since they prayed often each day, this gave the spirit opportunity to meet them.
 - b. The declaration was gloriously true, but was corrupted by its profane source.
 4. Paul gets fed up with this profane distraction and commands the spirit to come out.
 - a. The apostolic formula was simple – commandment in the name of Jesus Christ.
 - b. There was no extended exorcism; the spirit left immediately (22:13 cp 9:18).
- H. Paul and Silas are slandered by the damsel's masters, whipped, and cast into prison (19-24).
1. In spite of Paul's actual message, their own damsel's testimony, and the miracle of devil expulsion, these blind pagans could only think of their financial loss. America?
 2. The enemies of the gospel will use political force to stop preachers whenever possible.
 3. As a colony of Rome (12), the rulers were Romans and highly exalted Roman law.
 4. As a general rule, Christians in the Roman Empire were models of good citizenship.
 - a. There is no New Testament evidence of Paul teaching customs against Rome.
 - b. Paul taught God had ordained Caesar and Rome's Empire (Romans 13:1-7).

- c. Peter taught we submit to civil ordinances for the Lord's sake (I Pet 2:11-17).
- d. When prophesying against Rome, Paul was very cautious (II Thess 2:3-7).
- 5. So much for "innocence until proven guilty." They were falsely charged (20-21), denied a trial (22), publicly stripped (22), publicly beaten uncondemned (23,37), and put in stocks in the inner prison without any medical attention (24,33).
- 6. Isn't it amazing how much unity is created among men against Jesus Christ and truth?
- I. With Paul and Silas bound in the prison, the Lord brings His own sign and wonder (25-30).
 - 1. We will take extra time with this section for the reason that Arminian sophists have abused this text as a recipe for regeneration based on the mere sound of its words.
 - 2. Beaten and bound, their spirits were rejoicing in the Holy Ghost (Eph 5:18-19; 6:18).
 - 3. God sends a sudden and great earthquake, opening all doors and bonds and stocks; but this is not the greatest miracle God works in the darkness of this profane jail and city.
 - 4. The jailor, in great fear for dereliction of duty, shows a pagan heart and seeks suicide.
 - a. The jailor was not asking Paul and Silas to hear more about Jesus Christ.
 - b. The jailor was not asking Paul and Silas to repeat his favorite sermon.
 - c. The jailor was not asking Paul and Silas how they cast out the damsel's devil.
 - d. The jailor was not lying on his bed listening to their prayers and singing (25).
 - e. The jailor was soundly asleep in the vain comfort of his depraved faith.
 - f. The jailor was then applying his depraved religion to relieve his fearful soul.
 - 5. Paul relieves his fears and blows his mind by saving his life and stating all present.
 - 6. Consider wisely the incredible change that occurs in this pagan, Roman jailor.
 - a. He believes and obeys Paul in a matter of panic and life-threatening danger.
 - b. He rushes to Paul and trembling from the situation falls down at their feet.
 - c. After they raise him up, he brings them out and respectfully asks for salvation.
 - d. The change in this man was by the grace of God. Contrast others (John 9:30; Acts 4:16; 6:8 – 7:60; Luke 16:31). What invitational hymn did they play?
 - 7. What in the world was the jailor seeking? Can we find the sense (Ne 8:8; II Tim 2:15).
 - a. He was not a weekend theological student asking for justification by faith.
 - b. He was not asking for election, predestination, reconciliation, or glorification.
 - c. He was not asking what to do in order to be born again, as many presume.
 - d. He did not understand God's holy claims against him by Adam and his sins.
 - e. Under great fear and conviction, he was seeking peace with God and hope.
 - f. Maybe he knew the frequent testimony of the devil-possessed damsel (17).
- J. Paul commands him to believe on Jesus Christ for his salvation and his whole family (31-34).
 - 1. What did Paul offer? Can we wisely find the sense of his words (Ne 8:8; II Tim 2:15)?
 - a. Paul did not offer him election, predestination, justification, or regeneration.
 - b. There are three phases of salvation that occur prior to believing (eternal, legal, and vital), and there are two phases that follow it (practical and final).
 - c. Paul offered him peace with God and hope through the gospel of Jesus Christ, and he further offered by the Spirit the same peace and hope for his family.
 - d. Paul offered the means of gospel salvation and the evidence of final salvation.
 - e. Paul did not offer him anything on mere faith alone (James 2:14-26; Gal 5:6).
 - 2. Contrary to all Fundamentalists, this is not the formula for regeneration of dead men.
 - a. Regeneration precedes any faith or action toward God (John 1:13; 3:3-8; 5:25).
 - b. There was no question about the Lordship of Jesus Christ – He is the Lord!
 - c. There was nothing of inviting Jesus into his heart or other Arminian sophism.
 - 3. Paul and Silas preached the gospel of Christ to the jailor and to his whole house before they were baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and returned kind care of the apostles.
 - 4. From the faithless, hopeless vanity of pagan Rome, he now trusted God with great joy.
 - a. Though the natural creation and providence display God, it is not enough.

- b. God chose to save men to the knowledge of God by preaching (I Cor 1:17-21).
 - 5. His faith is immediately accompanied with works of love and faith (I Thess 4:2-4).
 - 6. We do not form this supernatural operation of God form jail ministries for perverts.
 - K. Paul gently punishes the rulers of Philippi for his unlawful treatment at their hands (35-39).
 - 1. Why did the magistrates release them in the morning after ordering secure keeping?
 - a. There is not much of a natural explanation for such conduct and none given.
 - b. How much was the Spirit in the matter? Did the Lord simply want the jailor?
 - 2. For the jailor to keep his office, the prisoners are still there, including Paul and Silas.
 - 3. Paul explains his purpose in wanting a more public effort on their part to cover things.
 - a. Paul did not appeal to Caesar, for the danger to his life and ministry were past.
 - b. To clear the gospel of false claims and protect the saints there, Paul does this.
 - 4. When the magistrates hear this message, they are afraid of what they did to Romans.
 - a. Silas must also have been Roman, for Paul uses the plural “us” and “Romans.”
 - b. Where clear laws can serve the saints, we wisely use them (22:25; 25:11).
 - 5. The rulers personally came to the jail, brought them out, and begged them to leave.
 - 6. Even after obtaining such a personal escort, they still stay in Philippi a while longer.
 - L. Paul and Silas comfort the saints in Philippi and leave for their next field of endeavor (40).
 - 1. They enter the house of Lydia, where Timotheus and Luke had been staying also (15).
 - 2. They comforted them with their release, the jailor’s conversion, and Christ’s grace.