

# **“Out Of The Prison Cell And Into True Life”**

## **Acts 16:16-40**

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**Teaching Aim:** To explore the salvation of the Philippian jailor and to see how his conversion story is similar to our own. To realize salvation is a free gift from God that can neither be bought nor earned by good works. To understand salvation is by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. To recognize works *“that God sees as good”* come after regeneration (after we are born-again) and are motivated out of a heart of love for the Lord and the desire to please Him!

### **DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)**

#### **Part I: A demon possessed slave girl with a spirit of divination (1 Cor. 16:16-19)**

1. The first church in the continent of Europe was in the Roman colony of Philippi and very-likely met in the house of Lydia (**vv. 14-15**). What was different about the young lady who cast praises at Paul as he was on his way to worship (**vs. 16**)? What powerful spirit possessed her? How did this spirit manifest itself? Why were the girl’s owners appreciative of her demon possession?
2. What did the girl proclaim as Paul went out to pray (**vs. 17**)? Was this the truth? If it was the truth, why did Paul get upset that she was saying this? Do you think it might have been that she was saying it in a mocking tone? Or do you think it was because the Greeks believed the Most-High God was the false god *“Zeus,”* not the God of the Bible?
3. How long did this harassment go on for before Paul finally did something (**vs. 18**)? What did Paul do? How did the demon respond to the apostle’s command? Do Christians still have authority over demons today? (See **Matt. 10:1; Luke 9:1-2**) If so, to what degree? Were the girl’s masters pleased that Paul delivered her from her demon possession (**vs. 19**)? Why or why not? What did they do to Paul and Silas because of this deliverance? Have you ever had anyone attack you because you remained faithful to the Lord?

#### **Part II: A mob mentality in Philippi and God’s intervention (1 Cor. 16:20-28)**

1. Who did the slaveowners bring Paul and Silas to (**vs. 20**)? What was a magistrate? What accusation did the slaveowners bring against Paul and Silas? What trouble had the two supposedly brought upon Philippi (**vs. 21**)? Why do so many people in the world still look down on the Jewish people today? Have you noticed that many people are beginning to look down on Christians as well? What does this mean for the future?

2. How did the multitude (or mob) respond to the owner's accusations (**vs. 22**)? Were Paul and Silas offered a fair trial? Why or why not? The magistrates had individuals called "*lictors*" serving under them to administer punishment. It is said that each lictor carried both a rod and an ax. What two punishments did the lictors give to Paul and Silas? Note: This is where we get the saying, "*He was given a licking!*"
  
3. According to **verse 23**, how severely were Paul and Silas beaten? Is there any significance to Paul and Silas being placed in the inner prison and having their feet fastened in stocks (**vs. 24**)? What are stocks? What caused them to be so painful on their victims?
  
4. What were Paul and Silas doing at midnight while most of the city slept (**vs. 25**)? Why were they doing this? Are you able to praise and worship God while you go through difficult times? Why? Who was listening in the background as the men prayed and sang? Do people still watch Christians today to see how we handle the difficult times of life?
  
5. What did God do in response to the prayer and praise of Paul and Silas (**vs. 26**)? What two supernatural events took place at the moment of the earthquake? (See **Matt. 27:54; 28:2; Acts 4:31**)
  
6. Had the keeper of the prisoners been listening to Paul and Silas as they prayed and sang (**vs. 27**)? How does the Philippian jailer relate to unbelievers today? What did it take to wake him up? Has a crisis in your life ever woke you up spiritually? What was it?
  
7. Why was the Philippian jailer preparing to kill himself (**vs. 27**)? (See Commentaries) How did Paul respond once he realized the man's intent (**vs. 28**)? What made the events of **verse 28** so unusual? Was this the normal reaction of believers in the Bible when the prison doors were supernaturally opened? (See **Acts 5:17-20; 12:4-11**) Why do you think the prisoners stayed this time?
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### Part III: The conversion of the Philippian jailer and his household (1 Cor. 16:29-40)

1. Why do you think the Philippian jailer fell down at the feet of Paul and Silas (**vs. 29**)? Do you think the man was more afraid of God at this point or of his Roman authorities? What critically important question did the jailer ask Paul and Silas in **verse 30**? What are the two possible meanings of the jailer's intent in asking this question? Which of the two do you think is the correct interpretation?
2. Paul may have been using a play on words as he answered the Philippian jailer in **verse 31**. What critical truth did Paul reveal to the jailer? Is there any way to salvation other than by grace through faith in Jesus Christ? (See **Matthew 7:13-14; John 3:16; 14:6; Acts 4:12**)? What can we learn about our salvation from the following verses? (See **Rom. 3:10-12; John 6:44, 65; Eph. 2:1-10**)
3. Is the idea of household salvation a guarantee that all of your Christian family members will believe and follow Jesus (**vs. 31b**)? Why or why not? Many people use this verse as a proof text for "*paedo*" or infant baptism, but is it? Note: In this particular case, the Philippian jailer's entire household heard the Gospel from Paul and believed (**vs. 32**).
4. What is the first thing the jailer and those living in his household did after coming to faith in Christ (**vs. 33**)? Church father Chrysostom (347-407 AD) wrote, "*He washed and was washed; he washed them from their stripes, and was himself washed from his sins.*" Why is it important for everyone who believes in Jesus to follow Him in water baptism? (See **Matt. 28:18-20; Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21-22**) Have you followed the Lord in water baptism? If not, what is stopping you?
5. What special event took place immediately following the baptism (**vs. 34**)? Not only were the prisoners free for the evening, but the Philippian jailer was free for all eternity from his bondage to sin. What are some ways that your life has changed for the better since coming to faith in Christ?

6. What unexpected message came in the morning (**vs. 35**)? Why do you think the magistrates had a change of heart? Has God ever rocked your life to the point where you've changed your direction spiritually? If so, when? What was the event?
7. What alarming truth did Paul reveal to the magistrates in **verse 37**? Do you think the jailer was glad to hear the news that he could now release his prisoners? Who passed the message on to Paul (**vs. 36**)?
8. How did Paul respond to the news of his release (**vs. 37**)? Why was Paul's response alarming to the magistrates? Did this decision put their jobs, their lives, and the welfare of the entire Roman colony on the line? Why? The magistrates wanted Paul and Silas out of town as quickly and as quietly as possible. What demand did Paul make to them before he would leave? Was this a good decision on Paul's part?
9. How did the officials respond when they heard of Paul's refusal to leave and his demands for them to come to him (**vv. 38-39**)? The magistrates realized for them to come was tantamount to a public apology. Why was this apology so important to the young church at Philippi? Whose house was this church most-likely meeting in? Do you think the Philippian jailer and his household started attending this house church as well?
10. What did Paul and Silas do once they were released from prison (**vs. 40**)? What was their purpose in going to Lydia's house before leaving Philippi? Encouragement of church attendees is still important today as life can be tough for all of us. What are some ways that other Christians have encouraged you during difficult times in the past? Are you in turn encouraging other Christians as they walk through difficult times today?

**MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!***

- Satan does his best to hinder the work of God; we can expect his attacks anytime we step forward spiritually.
- Greater is He who is in us than he who is in the world; it is helpful for every Christian to remember this spiritual truth when times are difficult.
- The Jewish people are still the most hated people group in the world and attitudes are beginning to change about Christians as well.
- Paul and Silas' midnight prayer and praise meeting ended in God removing their chains and opening the prison doors.
- The Philippian jailer, like many of the lost today, didn't realize he was the one in bondage.
- Sometimes God uses the earthshaking events of life to bring us into a closer walk with Him.
- To believe on the Lord Jesus is at the heart of the Gospel message and of our salvation.