

- A Study In Acts -

Chapter Sixteen – Second Journey of Paul

ACTS 16:16-24:

We began this journey with Paul and Silas in **Antioch of Syria**; they then traveled through the rest of **Syria** and through the region of **Cilicia** strengthening **the Bodies of Christ** along the way. When they had come to the area of the two cities of **Lystra and Derbe**, they will pick up young Timothy to travel with them. They delivered the decrees to these cities which strengthened them to a productive unity. From here they will travel to two new areas of Asia Minor: **Phrygia and Galatia**. Luke does not record anything about these visits and Paul will not return to these regions until **Chapter 19**.

Passing through the region of Mysia (having been forbidden by the Spirit of God to go into Asia and Bithynia at this time), Paul and his group have come to **Troas**. Here at Troas, Paul will have a vision encouraging him to go to Macedonia and bring the Gospel. As they determine to go to Macedonia, we learn that Luke joins them.

They set out across the Aegean Sea and cross with relative ease, stopping at the island of **Samothrace**, and the next day arriving at **Neapolis**, the seaport town for Philippi. From Neapolis they head straight to **Philippi**, the chief city of this region.



**Note:** Before we begin to look into the work of Paul here in Philippi, I would like to share with you, from his own words, some things to consider as we look at the events in Philippi, note:

**Philippians 4:8-9** “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things. <sup>9</sup> The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”

As Paul writes back to the Christians established by the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ here in Philippi, he reminds them of all the properties necessary to learn, and states that they have witnessed all of them in his actions among them. We will in the next lessons begin to look at three examples of these events to be noticed and recalled by these brethren and you and me.

#### **Text #1:**

**Acts 16:16-19** “Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. <sup>17</sup> This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.” <sup>18</sup> And this she did for many days.

But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour. <sup>19</sup> But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged *them* into the marketplace to the authorities.”

#### **Example #2: Producing Good Works in the Face of Adversity!**

As Paul is going to make his way to the same location, he found Lydia and her household in order to pray, he will come across a slave girl who is the source of much profit for her masters.

**Spirit of Divination:** This is from the Greek “*Ruthun*”, and used in the sense of ‘the spirit of a large snake’. “*Ruthun*” is the rudimentary word for the English ‘Python’. These are very similar to the Hebrew word used in **Genesis 3**, translated to the English ‘Serpent’.

Luke is stating that a spirit of unsavory character has entered her and enabled her to practice soothsaying for her masters.

Yes, this had to be a fact in order for the Apostolic power through the Spirit of God to demonstrate that the name of Jesus Christ had power over all principalities and powers, whether in heaven or on earth (**Matthew 28:18**; **Philippians 2:9-11**; etc.). God’s allowance of this for a time, was a sign for all of us, testifying of the authenticity of the word delivered by the Apostles of Jesus the Christ (**Mark 16:20**). Everything that has been revealed always has purpose and

order, nothing is random. Since the word is once delivered and testified of, there is no further need to demonstrate this any longer (**Jude 3; 2 Peter 1:16-21**).

**Come Out of Her:** The claims of the slave girl were absolutely true concerning who Paul and Silas were, and they came to people who had some confidence in her utterances; so, why did this annoy the Apostle to the Gentiles so much?

The answer of course is found in Luke's description of the source of the claims. To accept demons as witnesses to the Gospel of Jesus as the Christ would be to convince the people that there was an alliance between them and the words of the Apostles!

This would be like advertising an invitation to come and worship with the saints on the side of a beer delivery truck. Thus, all good reports would be lost due to the nefarious source used to broadcast the truth. To guard against this association with evil in any way, both Jesus (see: **Mark 1:34; 3:11-12**) and His disciples cast out demons. This demonstrated that they abhorred evil in any form (**Romans 12:9**), and that they wielded a greater power than that of evil, one capable of delivering man from evil (**Ephesians 6:11**)!

**Text #2:**

**Acts 16:20-24** “And they brought them to the magistrates, and said, “These men, being Jews, exceedingly trouble our city; <sup>21</sup> and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans, to receive or observe.” <sup>22</sup> Then the multitude rose up together against them; and the magistrates tore off their clothes and commanded *them* to be beaten with rods. <sup>23</sup> And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw *them* into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. <sup>24</sup> Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.”

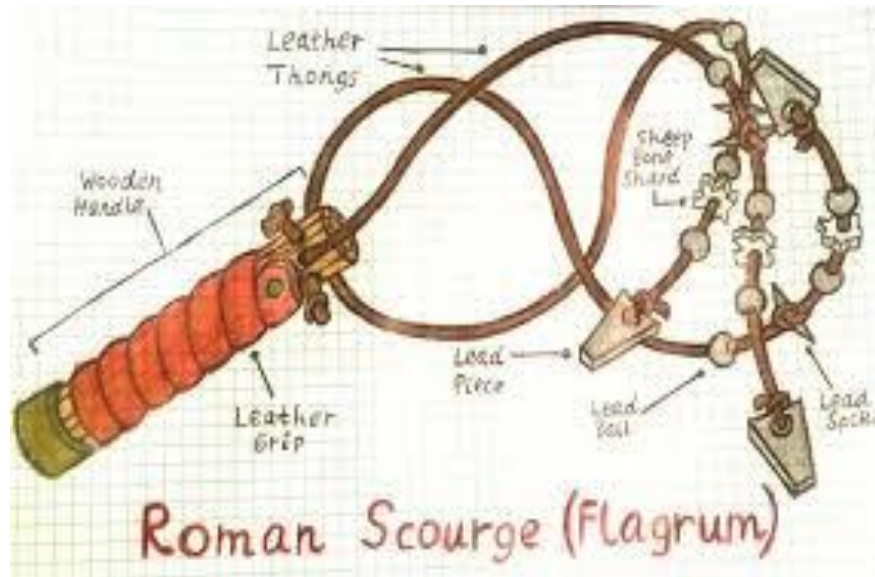
**Magistrates:** This term is used in the English to explain Praetors, or judicial rulers. Since this is the chief city in this Roman province, it should not surprise us to find the regions judicial rulers located here.

**Persecution:** Paul knew great persecution from the Jews as he preached Jesus as the Christ; however, starting here, we will find that the only time the Gentiles persecuted the Apostle sent to them was when he removed their source of income (we will see another instance of this when he is sought by the guild of silversmiths in Ephesus – **Acts 19:23-41**).

**Commanded a Beating:** The first thing to note as the masters of this young woman bring them to the magistrates is that neither Luke nor Timothy is brought. It may be that they only brought Paul and Silas because they were Jews, and it seems there is no love for Jews in Philippi.

The second thing to note is they don't charge Paul and Silas with the miracle, but that “**they teach customs which are not lawful for Romans to receive or observe.**” This can only be a reference to the one true God, versus the Caesars of Rome who often proclaimed themselves gods.

At any rate, the swift anger of the people and the magistrates is going to cause them to commit a grievous error. They are going to administer judgment on Paul and Silas without trial, thinking them to be Jews, instead of determining that Paul was a Roman citizen, and then worthy of due process.



### **Roman Scourge Instrument**

**This sketch depicts a Roman Flagrum which was designed to quickly remove the flesh from the body of a victim.**

The Romans were masters at the administration of beatings (the practice known as *'Flagrum'*). There were commonly only two punishments for crime in the Roman Empire, beatings and death (and in the case of death, one was always beaten before being crucified). Since Rome used capital punishment as a pure deterrent, beatings were administered by the Romans in such a way as to make sure they were satisfied you would never consider committing this crime again. This was a brutal punishment, often employing both whips with stone, metal, or bone attached to the end of the lengths and rods. The administration of the beating was subjective and purely the purview of the supervisor of the beating (usually a centurion); lasting until he was satisfied.

Luke uses the terminology of “Many stripes”; which is the Latin *'Verbera'*, both to describe the practice and to give the impression of the severity of their punishment.

They are then imprisoned in chains in their abused condition. This is where we will find them in the next lesson.

**Next: “Paul Never Allows an Opportunity to Pass!”**