

## THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES

Acts 16:35-17:7 | Session 43 | More Trouble Ahead

The doors of the prison were opened by a supernatural earthquake. The jailer believed on the Lord Jesus Christ and was saved, as was his household. In addition, they were baptized. We discussed the possibility of the baptism being a Jewish ritual cleansing (even though the jailer was presumably a Gentile) in order to allow the jailer and his family to more readily have fellowship with the new Jewish believers in Philippi. The word **baptized** is transliterated throughout the New Testament. It is translated as *immersed, or dipped*. Therefore, whenever you read the word **baptized**, you should replace it in your mind with *immerse* (See Romans 6:1-5). My contention is baptism in the New Testament was always a Jewish cleansing. The evangelical church has turned it into a *first step of discipleship*. Baptism is neither commanded or prohibited in the *Body of Christ*. Nevertheless, the result of the jailer and his family's belief was that they rejoiced!

Verses 35,36—

**Sent the serjeants**, literally *the one who carries the rod*. Today we use the term sergeant at arms as one who keeps order in a meeting, i.e. House of Representatives. Rather than coming themselves, the ones who put Paul and Silas into jail sent a servant to pass on the message to the jailer, **Let these men go**. It does not appear that anyone else was aware of the earthquake and the subsequent release of Paul and Silas, adding more to the assumption it was a supernatural event. The jailer passed the message on to Paul, **go in peace**.

Verse 37,38—

**But Paul said unto them**, the **them** being the **magistrates**. Through the jailer, Paul sends a message back to the city leaders, **nay (No) verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out**. Here we have an example of resistance. Many Christians believe when the government say jump, we as *good Christians* must say "How high!" Not so. There is a time for civil disobedience and Paul shows us a perfect example. *We're not leaving this jail until you come yourselves and let us out*. Christians have every right to push back. This may result in a good outcome, or a bad outcome, but either way, injustices should not be met with passive indifference. In this case, Paul and Silas **being Romans** (this is the first we get the idea Silas, or Silvanus the Latin spelling, was also a Roman) were beaten and put in prison without any kind of trial. This was a violation of Roman law and a criminal offense on the part of the magistrates. Paul does not *turn the other cheek*. The great Roman statesman, Cicero (106 B.C. – 43 B.C.) wrote, "To bind a Roman citizen is a crime, to flog him is an abomination, to slay him is almost an act of murder: to crucify him is—what? There is no fitting word that can possibly describe so horrible a deed."<sup>1</sup>

Verse 39—

**And they came and besought them**. Did they take Paul at his word or did he have some kind of identification proving he was a Roman citizen? They came personally (**besought**, Greek; *parakaleo, to come alongside*) however, to escort the missionaries out of the prison, begging then to leave town.

Verse 40—

Again we see some resistance from Paul. Rather than leaving town immediately, **they went to the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed**. The new believers were undoubtedly shaken by the beating and arrest of Paul and Silas and they needed comforting. Paul, presumably, shared the miracle of their release and the salvation of the new Gentile believer to encourage them all and most likely compel them to begin meeting together as the Body of Christ.

Acts 17:1,2—

**They came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews**. Paul always went to the Jew first. The synagogue was a place for the Jewish people to meet on the Sabbath. They also met on Monday and Thursday. The Shema was read and recited, Deuteronomy 6:4-9. They prayed, and they read the Law of Moses (Acts 15:21). It was also the place of judicial administrative functions, and even punishment to lawbreakers. Paul received 40 lashes minus 1, in a synagogue (2 Corinthians 11:24; cf. Deuteronomy 25:3). **Reasoned with the out of the scriptures**. Since the gospel of justification by grace through faith was *hid in God*, he could not have shared the grace message at this point.

Verse 3—

He shared the kingdom message to the Jews that Jesus the Messiah. **Jesus, whom I preach to you, is Christ** (that is, Messiah).

Verse 4—

It would have been a hard pill to swallow that *you killed the Messiah!* But, **some of them** (some Jews) **believed, and consorted** (cast their lots) **with Paul and Silas**. Among the believing Jews were devout **Greeks**, these would be Greeks of the Jewish faith, and of them there were **a great multitude**. **Chief women not a few**. The Jewish community was not a chauvinistic society. Women had a place and were granted respect, unlike the Muslim religion where women are looked down upon and are subservient to the male. Judaeo/Christian faith elevates everyone and in the Body of Christ (what we call the Church), there is neither male nor female; all are one in Christ.

Verse 5-7—

There were, however, **Jews which believed not** who were **moved with envy**. Typically, when someone is moved to envy it is because they have lost the attention of others, or believe they are losing their power. Here these envious Jews **took unto them lewd fellows of the baser sort to set the city on an uproar**. This strategy is an age-old one and continues even today. It is a tactic used when losing a battle or an argument. It's a disgusting and cheap way to attempt to win. Think Antifa and the rioters we see daily in the news—those of the *baser sort* who are being paid to set cities across the world in an uproar. These are people with nothing to lose; often they have no job, or even a place to stay. They don't care if they go to jail or if they have a criminal record since they have no assets, goals, or aim in life. Luke doesn't tell us who **Jason** is, but he was the host of Paul and his fellow travelers. The Antifa type **company...assaulted the house of Jason...looking for Paul and Silas, but found them not...**

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<sup>1</sup> Cicero, Verrine Orations 5.67.171