

ACTS CHAPTER 16

The Macedonian Vision (Acts 16:1-13)

Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek, and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium. Paul wanted this man to go with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. Now while Paul, Silas and Timothy were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe. So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.

They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in the Asia region. And after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus or Holy Spirit did not permit them; and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.



Map 8

Shows the location of Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, Jerusalem, Phrygia, Galatia, Asia, Mysia, Bithynia and Troas

Alexandria Troas (the full name of Troas) was located 16 kilometers (10 miles) from ancient Troy. It was a Roman colony and an important seaport for connections between Macedonia and Greece on the one hand and Asia Minor on the other.

There a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.”

Should we also look today for some supernatural manifestation in seeking God’s guidance? No. Today we are to walk entirely “by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians 5:7). Of the many such supernatural ‘calls’ recorded in the Scriptures, this one of Paul at Troas is the last, for such manifestations vanished away with the setting aside of Israel and her kingdom hopes.

When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

Why do we suddenly see a “we” passage? Luke, the beloved physician (Colossians 4:14) who is the writer of the book of Acts, is informing here the reader that he had joined the party at Troas. His historical style of writing gives place to a style of writing of personal observation.

So putting out to sea from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace. This island was a convenient place for boats to anchor rather than risk sailing at night. On the day following we went to Neapolis, the seaport for Philippi; and from there to the city of Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia. Since Philippi was a *Roman* colony, it was independent of provincial administration and had a governmental organization modeled after that of Rome. Many retired legionnaires from the Roman army settled there.



Photo 21

The island of Samothrace, with Mt. Fengari in the background.

And we were staying in this city for some days. And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer. There were so few Jews in Philippi that there was no synagogue, so the Jews who were there met for prayer along the banks of the Gangites River. It was customary for such places of prayer to be located outdoors near running water. And we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled.



Map 8
Shows the location of Macedonia, Troas, Samothrace, Neapolis, Philippi and Thyatira

First Convert in Europe (Acts 16:14-21)

A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening. Her name may be associated with her place of origin, the Hellenistic district of Lydia. Thyatira was famous for its dyeing works, especially royal purple (crimson).

And the Lord opened Lydia her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay.”

And she prevailed upon us. She used such entreaties and persuasions that at last we consented to lodge there.



Photo 22

Ruins of the centre of Philippi: the forum in the foreground, the market and the basilica in the background

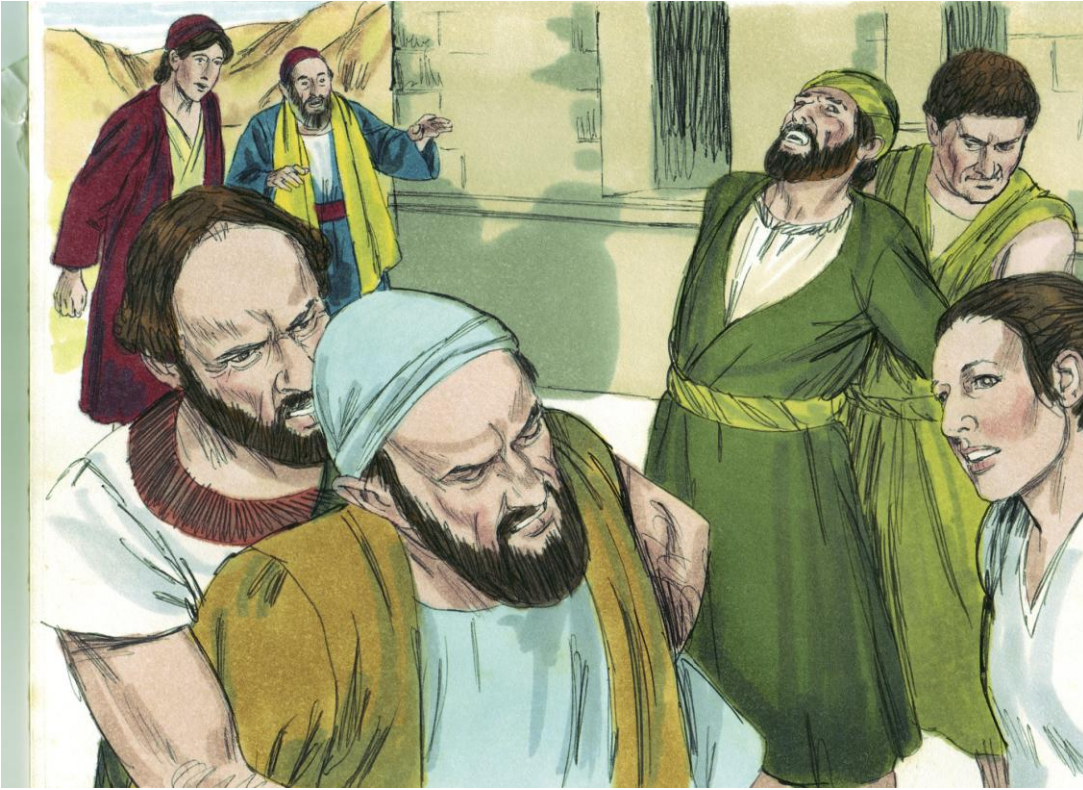
It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling.

Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, “These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.”

She continued doing this for many days.

But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!”

And it came out at that very moment. But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the authorities.



And when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, “These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews, and are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans.”

Paul and Silas Imprisoned (Acts 16:22-30)

The crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them and proceeded to order *them* to be beaten with rods. When they had struck them with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone’s chains were unfastened.



When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.

But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!”

And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas.

And after he brought them out, he said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

The Jailer Converted (Acts 16:31-40)

They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.”

Why is this clear, pointed message different as before Paul started his ministry? When “the crowds” had asked John the Baptist: “Then what shall we do?” he had insisted upon the fruits of repentance and of the kingdom (Luke 3:9-11). When a lawyer had asked our Lord: “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” the Lord had asked him: “What is written in the Law?” and had instructed him: “Do this and you will live” (Luke 10:25-28). When Peter’s convicted hearers at Pentecost had asked: “What shall we do?” Peter had directed them to “repent and be baptized ... for the forgiveness of your sins” (Acts 2:37,38).

Do the added words: “and your household” promise that the faith of one member of a family secures the salvation of the whole family? This teaching is not found anywhere in the Pauline epistles. The meaning is simply: “This goes for your household too. They, as well as you, may believe and be saved.”

And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his *household*. And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household.



Photo 23
Ruins at Philippi

Now when day came, the chief magistrates sent their policemen, saying, “Release those men.”

And the jailer reported these words to Paul, *saying*, “The chief magistrates have sent to release you. Therefore come out now and go in peace.”

But Paul said to them, “They have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out.”

The policemen reported these words to the chief magistrates. They were afraid when they heard that they were Romans, and they came and appealed to them, and when they had brought them out, they kept begging them to leave the city of Philippi. They went out of the prison and entered *the house of* Lydia, and when they saw the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.



Map 9

Map of Greece showing
Philippi

QUESTIONS OF ACTS CHAPTER 16

ALL ANSWERS CAN BE FOUND IN THE TEXT OF CHAPTER 16

1. Where did Paul meet Timothy and what was Timothy?

2. Why did Paul circumcise Timothy?

3. Who did not permit Paul, Silas and Timothy to go into Bithynia?

4. What vision appeared to Paul in the night when he was at Alexandria Troas?

5. What was the city of Philippi of the district of Macedonia and what colony was it?

6. How could Lydia respond to the things spoken by Paul?

7. What did the slave-girl, having a spirit of divination, say about Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke?

8. At about midnight what were Paul and Silas and the prisoners doing?

9. What did they say to the jailor in order to be saved?

10. What were the chief magistrates when they heard that Paul and Silas were Romans, and what did they do?

ACTS CHAPTER 16 (NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE)

The Macedonian Vision

1Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek, **2**and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium. **3**Paul wanted this man to go with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. **4**Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe. **5**So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.

6They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; **7**and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them; **8**and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. **9**A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." **10**When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

11So putting out to sea from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and on the day following to Neapolis; **12**and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia, a *Roman* colony; and we were staying in this city for some days. **13**And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled.

First Convert in Europe

14A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. **15**And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

16It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling. **17**Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, "These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation." **18**She continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!" And it came out at that very moment.

19But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the authorities, **20**and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, "These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews, **21**and are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans."

Paul and Silas Imprisoned

22The crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them and proceeded to order *them* to be beaten with rods. **23**When they had struck them with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; **24**and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

25But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; **26**and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened. **27**When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. **28**But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!" **29**And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas, **30**and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

The Jailer Converted

31They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." **32**And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house. **33**And he took them that *very* hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his *household*. **34**And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household.

35Now when day came, the chief magistrates sent their policemen, saying, "Release those men." **36**And the jailer reported these words to Paul, *saying*, "The chief magistrates have sent to release you. Therefore come out now and go in peace." **37**But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out." **38**The policemen reported these words to the chief magistrates. They were afraid when they heard that they were Romans, **39**and they came and appealed to them, and when they had brought them out, they kept begging them to leave the city. **40**They went out of the prison and entered *the house of* Lydia, and when they saw the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.

Scripture taken from the NEW AMERICAN STANDARD BIBLE(r),

(c) Copyright 1960, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1971, 1972, 1973, 1975, 1977, 1995

by The Lockman Foundation Used by permission. (www.Lockman.org)