

Acts 16: 6: *'Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, ⁷ After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.'*

Paul and Barnabas are traveling back through the areas they'd visited during their first missionary journey. When they returned to Derbe and Lystra, they have brought Timothy, probably as an intern, into their missionary team, the members of which we know are: Paul, Silas, Luke, their scribe and historian and, now, Timothy.

We might think it odd that the Holy Spirit would prevent them from taking the Gospel of Salvation by God's Grace to Asia and Bithynia but He had His reason; perhaps the opposition in those places would have been so great as to lead to their deaths or, it was simply not God's time for having the Gospel preached in those areas; in only 600 years those areas will be ripe for the forced conversion unto Islam which was also in God's perfect Plan for the ages; His Plan was for Israel to be completely surrounded by murderous, hostile Islam and then for those hostile, murderous muslims of Islam would become the driving force which God would use to finally drive the Jews back to the Land of Israel in the Last Days before His Return, first in the Rapture and then as He steps first upon the Mount of Olives for the Battle of Armageddon during which every enemy of God, including all remaining Muslims, will be killed with the Sword which will emanate from the Mouth of the Lord Jesus Christ, perhaps meaning that with simply His Word, all will die.

'And I saw the beast, and the kings of the earth, and their armies, gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. ²⁰ And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. ²¹ And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse, which sword proceeded out of his mouth: and all the fowls were filled with their flesh. Rev 19:19

'For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. ¹³ Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.' Heb 4:12

Verse 8: *'And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. ⁹ And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. ¹⁰ And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.'*

And, so, after the disappointment of being prevented from preaching in Asia and *Bithynia*, the Holy Spirit has given them a very clear go-ahead to head over to Macedonia; now they will go with the full assurance that everything that awaits them will be from God's Hand for their good and His Glory; He will later write to the Church in Rome: *'And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren. ³⁰ Moreover whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. ³¹ What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? ³² He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?'* Rom 8:28
Paul knew he was of *'the called'*; he was chosen and called out of darkness and into God's Marvelous Light; and he knew he was called into Macedonia.

Peter will write: *'But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light;'* 1 Pet 2:9

Verse 11: *'Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis;'*

Here is a map of this, Paul's second missionary journey; we finished the first, during which he was joined with Barnabas the entire way. Now we can trace his second and remember, he is likely walking over much of the land route: about 1300 miles with about 1400 miles of sea travel between.

Paul went on three missionary journeys from A.D. 46 to 57, traveling around much of Asia Minor and Greece. In A.D. 60, he was taken to Rome where God finally called him home to Heaven: the first thing he must have heard: *'... Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.'* Matt 25:21

Keep these notes handy throughout our study of Acts so we can visually follow his progress...



https://www.conformingtojesus.com/images/webpages/apostle_paul_second_missionary_journey_map1.jpg

Verse 12: *'And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.'*

Now we begin to see names with which we are more familiar: Paul will establish the Church in Philippi during this journey with Silas, Luke and Timothy, the first Church he will plant in Europe: later, from his prison in Rome, in A.D. 61, Paul will write to the Church of the Philippians in appreciation for their generosity in financial supporting him at various times throughout his ministry. He stayed in Philippi 'certain days,' long enough to plant the Church and establish upon the strong and healthy foundation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 13: *'And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither. ¹⁴ And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.'*

Here we see Luke, the writer of The Acts of The Apostles, saying 'we;' he often reminds us that he is blessed to be part of this special group. Here, on the Sabbath, instead of telling us they went into the Synagogue, and perhaps there was no synagogue there, they went, rather, to the river where they knew that some gathered there for prayer and, also, that women customarily resorted there; their habit was to meet together by the river to pray. Paul and his companions began to preach the Gospel to these women and Lydia heard them.

She already was one who worshipped God but now He opened her heart to hear and believe the Truth of Himself. He had chosen her for Himself from the foundation of the World and then, at His exact planned moment, He opened her heart to the light of the Gospel and she was ready to hear and believe.

Verse 15: *'And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.'*

We often see entire families and households believing and being baptized together: Cornelius, Lydia, soon to see the Philippian jailor's family... as we saw at Pentecost: God was opening the hearts of entire groups, large and small but now, in the waning days of the True Church on Earth today, we're more likely to see one here, another there... it's as if God is picking the final harvest of fruit and grain, with just the gleanings remaining: the final remnant before the Lord Jesus Comes to remove His Bride before His Wrath is poured out on this demonic kingdom of darkness. We are that Last Days Remnant True Church!

Lydia's hospitality is just one of the countless unreported ways in which God must have supplied the needs of this missionary endeavor but even though unrecorded, each one will receive their reward from the Hand of the One Who directed their love toward His servants.

Verse 16: *'And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: ¹⁷ The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation. ¹⁸ And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.'*

Notice that Luke, the one writing this historical account for us, refers to the demon spirit as 'he;' he doesn't call the demon 'it' or 'her.' This is likely a powerful fallen angel; angels are always male, never female!

Why does Paul mind this free advertising from a well known 'spiritual' person from this region? First, she is well known; she brings her masters much gain through her ability to prophesy the future. When it says she is possessed (owned) by a spirit of divination, it is literally, a spirit of python from which we obviously get python, the serpent. In Greek mythology, in which this area is steeped, the name of Pythian serpent/dragon lived at the foot of Parnassus in Phocis, guarding the famous oracle of Delphi and had been killed by Apollo.

This is a demon spirit; the demons know all about Paul. Later, we'll read: *'And God wrought special miracles by the hands of Paul: ¹² So that from his body were brought unto the sick handkerchiefs or aprons, and the diseases departed from them, and the evil spirits went out of them. ¹³ Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the LORD Jesus, saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. ¹⁴ And there were seven sons of one Sceva, a Jew, and chief of the priests, which did so. ¹⁵ And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? ¹⁶ And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. ¹⁷ And this was known to all the Jews and Greeks also dwelling at Ephesus; and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Jesus was magnified.'* Acts 19:11

In essence, what this demon was doing was attempting to raise the credibility of this girl whom he possessed up to that of Paul's but also to, at the same time, lower Paul's credibility down to that of the sometimes accurate, but sometimes inaccurate, predictions of this demon possessed girl. God is always true, always completely trustworthy; what God predicts, through His Holy Spirit possessed prophets can be relied upon completely; nothing God prophesies will ever fall to the ground unfulfilled.

'The LORD was with Samuel as he grew up, and he let none of Samuel's words fall to the ground.' 1 Sam 3:19
Everyone knew that this girl's predictions were sometimes fulfilled while other times left unfulfilled; Satan would like nothing better than for God's servants to be seen as just like everyone else.

Verse 19: *'And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace unto the rulers, ²⁰ And brought them to the magistrates, saying, These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city, ²¹ And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither*

to observe, being Romans.'

The Jews stir up persecution because of envy and jealousy; the Gentiles stir up persecution because of greed. The church Paul will plant here in Philippi will be known for their generosity.

These Philippians live in an evil place among a crooked and perverse generation: *'For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure. ¹⁴ Do all things without murmurings and disputings: ¹⁵ That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;'* Philippians 2:13

We, too, live in a most crooked and perverse generation; we are watching the culmination of the planned destruction of this once great nation; when the Lord Jesus Christ does come for us, one day soon, it will be, here, like it was in the world to which God sent Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke; it will be perfectly acceptable and expected to persecute and kill Jews and Christians... that time is fast approaching!

Verse 22: *'And the multitude rose up together against them: and the magistrates rent off their clothes, and commanded to beat them. ²³ And when they had laid many stripes upon them, they cast them into prison, charging the jailor to keep them safely: ²⁴ Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.'*

Poor Paul... over and over... beatings, stonings, imprisonments and yet he always trusts God, relying on Him completely, seemingly never wavering... I hope I'm never tested like Paul... I fear for my attitude; I really do!

Paul and Silas have been severely beaten; their backs are raw and the jailor, fearing for his own safety locks them up tight; in fact, he even locks their feet into stocks: wooden blocks with holes into which hands and feet could be locked. He put them into the darkest, dankest, innermost hole of the jail and there was never any thought to 'cruel and unusual punishment'... the crueller and more usual, the better! These are the people who invented crucifixion!

Timothy and Luke seem to have escaped this particular sweep. This might very well explain why John Mark turned and ran at Antioch in Pisidia and why Paul then refused to take him on again for the next journey.

The jailor put them down into his most secure cell because if they'd been allowed to escape, his life would have been forfeited and we'll see that he had a family to think of; we might think of him as an uncaring and cruel person but we'll soon see that this happens to be one whom God chose for Himself from the foundation of the World; this is one whose heart had been prepared.

Verse 25: *'And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.'*

I'm sure we'd all like to think we'd be singing praises unto God... but I don't know... hard to imagine...

But they did so and God responded miraculously unto Salvation.

Verse 26: *'And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened, and every one's bands were loosed. ²⁷ And the keeper of the prison awaking out of his sleep, and seeing the prison doors open, he drew out his sword, and would have killed himself, supposing that the prisoners had been fled.'*

Lest anyone claim it was just a coincidence that an earthquake just happened to occur then... everyone's shackles also came loose.

Our poor jailor figures he's done for so he might as well take the easy way out... a quick death and straight to hell but God had much bigger plans for him and his family; he along with Lydia and perhaps even the girls suddenly loosed from her demonic possession were going to all be part of the new, thriving Church of the Philippians!

Verse 28: *'But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. ²⁹ Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, ³⁰ And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? ³¹ And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.'* None of the other prisoners made a run for it... everyone stayed put! I think many of them became believers that night; we're seeing the Church at Philippi being born!