

Acts 16:11-24**“How Paul became a jailbird”**

“From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis.¹² From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.¹³ On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there.¹⁴ One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul’s message.

“¹⁵ When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. ‘If you consider me a believer in the Lord,’ she said, ‘come and stay at my house.’ And she persuaded us.

“¹⁶ Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling.¹⁷ She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, ‘These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.’¹⁸ She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so

annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, ‘In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!’ At that moment the spirit left her.¹⁹ When her owners realized that their hope of making money was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities.²⁰ They brought them before the magistrates and said, ‘These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar²¹ by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.’

“²² The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten with rods.²³ After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully.²⁴ When he received these orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks.”

Did you notice the change in verse 11 of our text?

I refer to the switch from 3rd person to 1st:

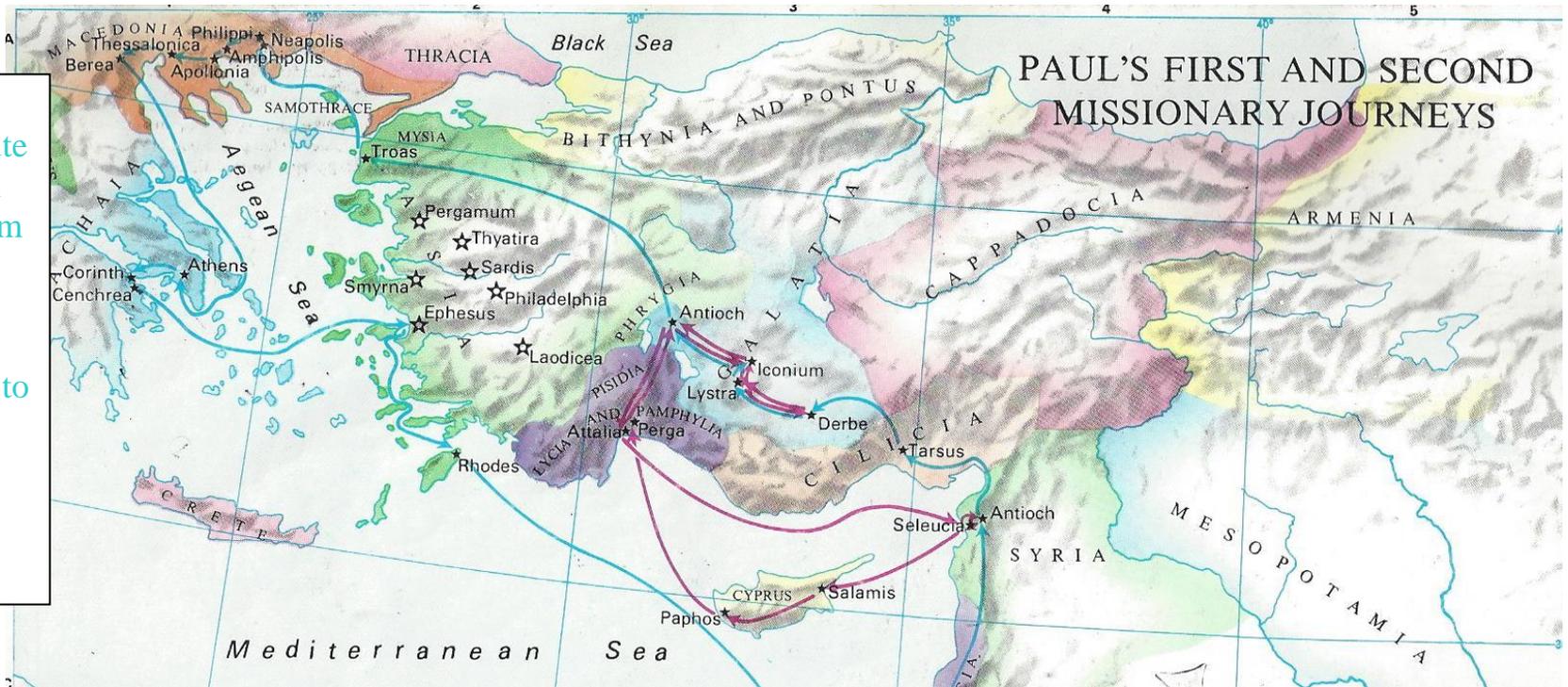
“From Troas we put out to sea.”

To this point in Acts, Luke the author used the 3rd person in the forms of *they* and *he*.

At Troas, Luke apparently joined the “party.”

Scholars refer to these Acts first person references as “we sections.”

The blue-green line on this map shows the route Paul and Silas, took on the 2nd mission trip from Antioch in Syria to Tarsus, Derbe, etc. northwest to Troas; across the Aegean Sea to Philippi in Macedonia, then south to Greece. Map adapted from one of Bob's old Bibles.



Paul regarded Luke a “beloved physician.”¹

Luke’s writings evidence extraordinary education; his actions indicate remarkable devotion to Jesus.

When Paul was imprisoned in Rome, all others forsook Paul, but Luke stayed with him.

We’ve passed over some intriguing questions that involved Paul getting to Troas on the northwest coast of Turkey.

From Lystra and Iconium to Troas is about 400 air miles.

That’s about the same as Cherokee, IA to Chicago, or Los Angeles to San Francisco.

Jets fly that far in less than an hour.

Hardly anyone walks those distances now. Even by camel, horse, or donkey, the trip would be arduous.

Luke joined Paul, Silas, and Timothy in Troas and they took a ship to Neapolis in Macedonia; then probably walked to Philippi.

Philippi was named after Alexander, the Great’s father, Philip of Macedon.

By the first century, the Romans colonized Philippi. **Rome often left colonies of military veterans in an area to maintain their control.**

These officers sometimes became jailers.

Some think the practice provided “semi-retirement” for older veterans.

¹ Colossians 4:14

You probably recall that Paul routinely attended a synagogue when first visiting a city.

Apparently lacking a strong Jewish population, Philippi had no synagogue.

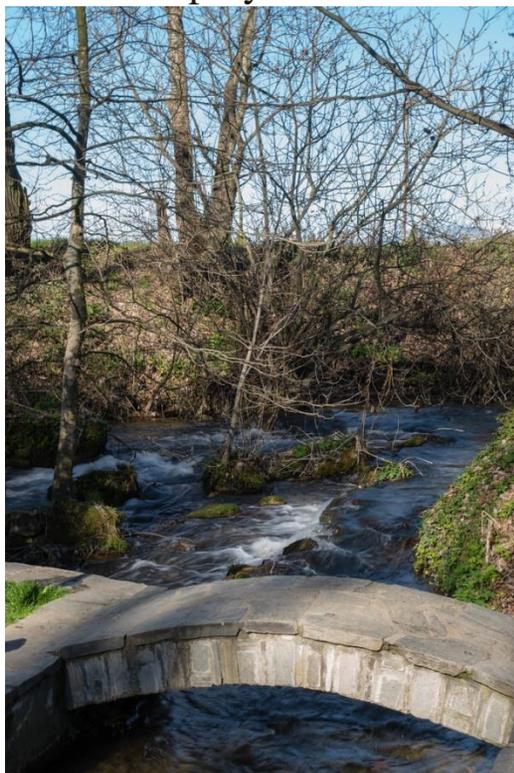
It took ten Jewish men to form a *minyán* (a Hebrew term) to qualify for a synagogue.

Jews and those attracted to Judaism gathered at a place along the river for prayers.

Gangites River near Philippi in Macedonia.



Ancient Roman road Via Egnatia, near Philippi.



Lydia, a businesswoman from Thyatira was among the worshipers that day.

Lydia sold purple dye, an expensive commodity extracted from shellfish.

Divers went deep to obtain the spiny shelled mollusk, from which they could extract a bare drop of reddish-purple dye.

Only royalty and very wealthy people could afford to wear purple.

Paul used the opportunity to tell that riverside group Jesus' good news about guilt, death, resurrection, and judgment. God opened Lydia's heart to the message and she gave her life to Christ.

She was baptized into Christ, very probably in that same Gangites River.

Her employees and servants, her household, gave their lives to Jesus, too.

The Lord might have tested Paul's faith that day when Lydia invited Paul and the group to stay at her place, which was likely an estate.

"If you consider me a believer in the Lord," (Lydia) said, 'come and stay at my house.' And she persuaded us."

Was that Paul's first time to visit in the home of and eat with someone of Gentile background? Paul faced more serious challenges; our text says:

“Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling.

She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, ‘These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.’ She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, ‘In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!’

At that moment the spirit left her.”

This incident teaches us first, that not all miracles come from God.

Jesus cautioned:

“False messiahs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect.

²⁵ See, I have told you ahead of time.”²

How do we keep from being deceived?

Two simple tests help us know right away.

Greed motivated the slave-girl’s owners.

First, give “miracles” the money test.

It doesn’t matter whether a “miracle” benefits a preacher or a church group, money stinks.

Want proof of what I’m saying?

Check the miracle of healing Elisha the prophet performed in 2 Kings 5.

Be sure to read the entire chapter.

The second truth test relates to credit.

Recall Peter’s comments when people in Jerusalem wanted to honor him and John for healing the crippled man? Acts 3:11, 12 NIV

“Now while he was still holding on to Peter and John, all the people, utterly amazed, ran together *and* crowded around them at the covered porch called Solomon’s portico. And Peter, seeing this, said to the people, ‘You men of Israel, why are you amazed at this? Why are you staring at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?’”

Jesus’ people glorify God for all good things.

The slave girl’s owners resembled many crooks. They didn’t know how to do an honest day’s work.

They seized Paul and Silas, whose clothes, mannerisms, or speech may have signaled their Jewish background.



Philippi Forum

² Matthew 24:24, 25 NIV



The girl's owners dragged Paul and Silas into the market place, worked up a crowd, and accused them before the town magistrates.

Note the graphic verbs Luke used in verses 22-24.

- The crowd *joined* (strong Greek verb) *the attack*.
- The magistrates *ordered them stripped and beaten*.
 - They were *severely flogged*.
 - *Thrown into prison*.
- Jailer was *commanded to carefully guard them*.
- He *put* (Greek *threw*) them into the inner prison.
 - *Fastened their feet in stocks*.

Do you wonder if Paul still felt the effects of the stoning he received in Lystra?

It's easy to get upset about present injustice. One newspaper, a short social media check, or 20 minutes of the morning news can really upset us.

Do you ever wonder where God's justice is?

Two guys trying to help someone were unjustly accused, brutally beaten, thrown in jail.

At midnight, they weren't crying, not beefing about injustice, not trying to hire lawyers.

Paul and Silas, legs locked in stocks, likely aching from the beatings they took, prayed, sang praise hymns, and the other prisoners listened.

Unknown to them, God was about to rattle the countryside with an earthquake, free them, and change the jailer's heart.

Paul and Silas spoke God's word to the jailer and his family. The jailer washed their wounds. He and his family believed in Christ and were baptized that same night.

The jailer invited them to his house and his wife fixed ham and eggs for breakfast.

Everything but the "ham and eggs" is absolutely true.

The Good News alters life perspective.

Jesus promised us resurrection to eternal life.

He'll also take care of evil.

Paul and Silas were tossed as if they were rags.

At Judgment, the Lord will throw Satan and his allies.

Revelation 20:10, 14 NIV

"And the devil, who deceived them was *thrown* into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been *thrown*.

They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

"Then death and hades were *thrown* into the lake of fire."

In the meantime we always joyfully praise God, love our enemies and pray for God to bless them.

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