

ACTS 16:23 & 24: *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.* Having received many stripes each, Paul and Silas were then cast into prison, and the jailor was charged to "keep them safely." Obviously the Greek doesn't translate into the English here with exactly the same meaning our minds might picture. Reading this in today's so called politically correct world we might get the view that Paul and Silas were treated so as not to violate their "civil rights;" that they were gently put into the prison, making sure that they were not further harmed in any way. Nothing could be farther from the truth here. Essentially their "civil rights" had already been violated by being beaten in the first place, which wasn't supposed to happen to Roman citizens, as we noted earlier. Having their "civil rights" violated, and having been severely beaten with many painful stripes, Paul and Silas were then "cast" into prison. The word "cast" here is number 906 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, and means: to throw or let go of a thing without caring where it falls; to hurl; to give over to one's care being uncertain about the result. There is no grace, mercy, or love in this word "cast." There is no concern whether or not one's "civil rights" are violated in this word "cast." So why do we next read that the jailor was charged to keep them safely? The Greek word translated "safely" here is number 806 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, and means: to make sure that these prisoners could not possibly escape; to keep them secure and well guarded so as to prevent escape. Verse 24 further explains that the jailor ...*Who, having received such a charge, thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.* Here we see how well guarded Paul and Silas were, for they were "thrust" into the inner prison. One commentator noted that the only fresh air to enter into the inner prison was when the door was briefly opened to exchange prisoners. Further the inner prison was the darkest, and most secure place in the prison.

We know a little of the cruelty that the Roman's perfected in their torture of prisoners, and such like. The crucifixion of Jesus on the cross is one prime example of how cruel the Roman's were, and how they had perfected torture. The treatment Paul and Silas received here at Philippi is just another example of Roman human cruelty. We note in verse 24 that after being violently thrust into the inner dark prison, Paul and Silas had their feet made fast in the stocks. The opinions vary from commentator to commentator as to what this actually meant, however all are in agreement that "the stocks" were two large pieces of wood, in which the feet were inserted, then locked in place probably after the legs were spread wide. One could not stand upright in such a position, thus it is most likely that Paul and Silas ended up sitting or lying in a most uncomfortable position, and if lying down they would be on a cold and dirty floor, getting dirt and filth in their many open wounds! Agony doesn't begin to describe their pain. Nor could they really get any rest, or comfort in this condition.

Midnight

We are going to read starting in ACTS 16:25 some of the things that happened here at the Philippian prison at midnight. Before we examine these next events at Philippi, I want to give a few thoughts concerning midnight.

The word "midnight" is found fourteen times in the Bible with two basic meanings. One expresses the thought that midnight occurs in the middle of the night, and the other expresses the darkness of gloom found at midnight. Let's consider "midnight" as expressing the darkest hour of the night; half way between daylight and daylight if you will. "Midnight" can be expressed in literal terms, in figurative terms, and in spiritual terms. The full overcomer will face many "midnight's" in spiritual terms throughout his or her life time. I know the Apostle Paul did. I know all the Old Testament worthies of faith did too.

It is no accident that the word "midnight" is found fourteen times in Scripture, for the number fourteen is the number that has to do with DELIVERANCE or SALVATION. The very first time we read the word "midnight" is in EXODUS 11. EXODUS 11:1 *And the LORD said unto Moses, Yet will I bring one plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Egypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he shall let you go, he shall surely thrust you*

out hence altogether. 2 Speak now in the ears of the people, and let every man borrow (ask or require) of his neighbour, and every woman of her neighbour, jewels of silver, and jewels of gold. 3 And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians. Moreover the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people. 4 And Moses said, Thus saith the LORD, About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: 5 And all the firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the firstborn of the maidservant that is behind the mill; and all the firstborn of beasts. 6 And there shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. 7 But against any of the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the LORD doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. Here the word "midnight" expresses the thought of the middle of the night.

We next read the word "midnight" in EXODUS 12. Between the verses we just read, and those we are about to read, the Lord instituted the Passover. Then we read in EXODUS 12:28 *And the children of Israel went away, and did as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so did they.* 29 *And it came to pass, that at midnight the LORD smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the firstborn of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the firstborn of cattle.* 30 *And Pharaoh rose up in the night, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; and there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead.* 31 *And he called for Moses and Aaron by night, and said, Rise up, and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel; and go, serve the LORD, as ye have said.* 32 *Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone; and bless me also.* 33 *And the Egyptians were urgent upon the people, that they might send them out of the land in haste; for they said, We be all dead men.* 34 *And the people took their dough before it was leavened, their kneadingtroughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.* 35 *And the children of Israel did according to the word of Moses; and they borrowed of the Egyptians jewels of silver, and jewels of gold, and raiment: 36 And the LORD gave the people favour in the sight of the Egyptians, so that they lent unto them such things as they required. And they spoiled (plundered; took heavy payment; took a toll; took away all their goods from) the Egyptians.*

Thus the Lord DELIVERED the children of Israel from the land of Egypt. EXODUS 12:42 states this of that night: *It is a night to be much observed unto the LORD for bringing them out from the land of Egypt: this is that night of the LORD to be observed of all the children of Israel in their generations.* This observance of that night is called the Passover.

In EXODUS 14 we find the children of Israel up against the Red Sea with the pursuing army of the Egyptians right behind them blocking their escape. We all know what happened next, for EXODUS 14:21 & 22 reads: *And Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.* 22 *And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left.* What I want you to see here is that the Lord DELIVERED the children of Israel from the pursuing Egyptians in the middle of the night, during the period of time between daylight, and daylight; in other words by the broadest of definitions, at midnight.

In JUDGES 16:1-3 we find Samson surrounded at night by the Gazites, whose name means: "the strong;" whose intention it was to kill Samson come daylight. JUDGES 16:3 reads: *And Samson lay till midnight, and arose at midnight, and took the doors of the gate of the city, and the two posts, and went away with them, bar and all, and put them upon his shoulders, and carried them up to the top of an hill that is before Hebron.* Thus Samson was DELIVERED from the hand of the Gazites during the darkest hour of the night, midnight.

In ACTS 12 we read that Peter was put in Herod's prison, who intended to kill him after Easter. Let's read what happened next. ACTS 12:5 *Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.* 6 *And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.* 7

And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands. 8 And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. 9 And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. 10 When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. 11 And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.

In this example we see that Peter was DELIVERED from Herod's prison in the middle of the night, during the period of time between daylight, and daylight; in other words by the broadest of definitions, at midnight. For sure it was a "midnight" time in the life of Peter.

In ACTS 9:25 and 2 CORINTHIANS 11:32 we find Saul of Tarsus being pursued by a garrison sent from the governor of Damascus. ACTS 9:25 tells us: *Then the disciples took him by night, and let him down by the wall in a basket.* When was Saul of Tarsus DELIVERED from the garrison of the Damascenes? In the middle of the night, during the period of time between daylight, and daylight; in other words by the broadest of definitions, at midnight. Here was just one example of the many we have of a "midnight" time in the life of Paul.

Later in the Apostle Paul's life we will read about the famous ship wreck he was in that occurred in ACTS 27. Here is some of what ACTS 27 says: *20 And when neither sun nor stars in many days appeared, and no small tempest lay on us, all hope that we should be saved was then taken away. 21 But after long abstinence Paul stood forth in the midst of them, and said, Sirs, ye should have hearkened unto me, and not have loosed from Crete, and to have gained this harm and loss. (The spiritual implication here is that we too need to heed Paul's gospel.) 22 And now I exhort you to be of good cheer: for there shall be no loss of any man's life among you, but of the ship. 23 For there stood by me this night the angel of God, whose I am, and whom I serve, 24 Saying, Fear not, Paul; thou must be brought before Caesar: and, lo, God hath given thee all them that sail with thee. 25 Wherefore, sirs, be of good cheer: for I believe God, that it shall be even as it was told me. 26 Howbeit we must be cast upon a certain island. 27 But when the fourteenth night was come, as we were driven up and down in Adria, about midnight the shipmen deemed that they drew near to some country;... . Shortly after this time all 276 souls on this doomed ship were DELIVERED safe on land, and thus received SALVATION from the sinking ship.*

What I want us to see and realize from these few examples is that during the darkest of times, at midnight in other words, there is a DELIVERER, a SAVIOUR, who has never failed in bringing the believer DELIVERANCE and SALVATION out of seemingly otherwise impossible situations. Brother Hill used to make a statement like: "when found in the King's dungeon, start looking for the King's wine." Wine speaks of joy. Jesus first miracle was changing ordinary water into wine at a wedding, thus bringing exceeding joy to everyone that was at that wedding. The children of Israel were exceedingly joyful after being DELIVERED from the bondage of Egypt after 430 years, and so we read in EXODUS 15 of them singing the song of redemption. Shortly we will find Paul and Silas too singing praises unto God while awaiting their DELIVERANCE and SALVATION, thus once again displaying the heart attitude of a full overcomer. The full overcomer has a song or rejoicing flowing out his lips from the depths of his thankful heart even during the darkest "midnight" times of his life. 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16 *Rejoice evermore.* This simple verse means that we as overcomers are to Rejoice evermore even during the the darkest "midnight" times of our life.

Consider the world we are living in today. Right now the world is facing "midnight." The darkest of times are upon us. LUKE 21:25-28 records: *And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; 26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken. 27 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in*

a cloud with power and great glory. 28 And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh. Mark summed up this "midnight" hour that is upon the world right now, recalling Jesus words, which he recorded in MARK 13. MARK 13:28 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near: 29 So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, even at the doors. 30 Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done. 31 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. 32 But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. 33 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is. 34 For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch. 35 Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning: 36 Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. 37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

One more thought before we examine probably one of the most famous "midnight" portions of scripture in ACTS 16. Earlier I stated that the full overcomer will face many "midnight's" in spiritual terms throughout his or her life time. I know the Apostle Paul did. I know all the Old Testament worthies of faith did too. These "midnight" times helped the full overcomer to become a full overcomer in the first place. In this months Grace and Glory (September 2005) there is a 90 year old article from Brother Copley entitled "Angels or Saints?" In this article Brother Copley references the book of REVELATION, and the many times we find the word "angels" there in. He correctly points out that often times these "angels" are none other than Saints of God! These "angels" (Saints of God) are found performing many important tasks during the tribulation. My question for you to think about is this: when did these Saints, these overcomers, learn to do these impossible things? We don't allow people to fly airplanes here on earth without proper training. Nor does the Lord expect these overcoming Saints to perform their appointed duties during the tribulation without proper training. These "angels" (Saints of God) that are found in REVELATION performing these many important tasks during the tribulation, learned from their many varied "midnight" experiences here on earth how to trust the Lord to do the impossible while living here on earth. Are you taking the training, or are you taking the next train out of here?

As we now return to ACTS 16 we expect Paul and Silas to be DELIVERED from their dark and dire midnight situation. This will be another in a long list of situations that the Lord DELIVERED Paul from in the middle of the night, during the darkest of times; midnight events that we intend to bring forth in this study if the Lord tarries that long.

Let's examine ACTS 16:25 in three sections. First, ACTS 16:25 *And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed,...* After the severe beating that Paul and Silas had experienced, and the uncomfortable pain that they were in, we would expect them to seek any relief that they could by moaning and groaning, but not by praying. You have no doubt heard the saying: "gloom, despair, pain and agony, if it weren't for bad luck I'd have no luck at all..." Paul and Silas didn't focus their attention on their pain and agony like all of the other prisoners before them were doing, rather they sought relief from their situation like any full overcomer does, by focusing upon the Lord, and praying to Him. Keep in mind it was midnight, the darkest hour of the night, and the darkest hour they have faced on this missionary journey, and yet we find Paul and Silas praying at midnight as prisoners with their feet held uncomfortably fast in the stocks.

What goes on at prison at midnight? Ernie Tisdell has been working at a prison for nearly twenty years, and he can better inform you what goes on in a prison at midnight. He could tell you of some strange happenings, for as we are all some what aware, the so called crazies come out more in the night than in the day, though sometimes now it may be hard to tell the difference. This kind of behaviour is magnified even more so in prison. Some can't sleep at night, so they stay awake at night, and keep everyone else they can awake too. I am not sure how much praying goes on in prison at midnight these days. Back to Paul and Silas. Even though it was midnight, Paul and Silas were not overcome with the darkness. Paul later wrote in EPHESIANS 5:8 *For ye were sometimes*

darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:... . Again in 1 THESSALONIANS 5:5 Paul writes: Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness. 6 Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. 7 For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. To these very same Saint's at Philippi Paul later wrote: PHILIPPIANS 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice. 5 Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. 6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. 8 Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. 9 Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do; and the God of peace shall be with you. Recall again what the Apostle Paul wrote in EPHESIANS 6:18, which is to be ...Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;...

Having read the above scriptures, let's look at the second part of ACTS 16:25. ACTS 16:25 And at *midnight* Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God:... . Here we find that not only did Paul and Silas pray at midnight, they went one remarkable step further, *...and sang praises unto God;...* . This kind of worship in such a dark time of midnight trial has to come from the bottom of ones sincere heart that is overflowing with the love of God. These were songs of faith and hope, for at the present time Paul and Silas were not yet DELIVERED from this seemingly hopeless and helpless midnight situation! Paul and Silas were here hopeless and helpless, yet the songs of praise just kept flowing out of their mouth. There they were in the deepest, and darkest most secure part of the prison, with no outside hope of DELIVERANCE or SALIVATION from this situation, and yet they *...sang praises unto God;...* ! This should speak volumes unto each of our hearts. Again 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16 states simply: *Rejoice evermore.* This simple verse means that we are to *Rejoice evermore* even during the darkest "midnight" times of our life. Out of the heart that rejoices evermore springs an endless flow of melodies of song, and praise unto the Lord.

Many of the songs that Paul and Silas knew came from the book of PSALMS. Maybe they sang the 34th PSALM. PSALMS 34:1 *I will bless the LORD at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth.* 2 *My soul shall make her boast in the LORD: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad.* 3 *C magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together.* 4 *I sought the LORD, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears.* 5 *They looked unto him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed.* 6 *This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.* 7 *The angel of the LORD encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them.* 8 *C taste and see that the LORD is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in him.* 9 *C fear the LORD, ye his saints: for there is no want to them that fear him.* 10 *The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger: but they that seek the LORD shall not want any good thing.* 11 *Come, ye children, hearken unto me: I will teach you the fear of the LORD.* 12 *What man is he that desireth life, and loveth many days, that he may see good?* 13 *Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.* 14 *Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it.* 15 *The eyes of the LORD are upon the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry.* 16 *The face of the LORD is against them that do evil, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.* 17 *The righteous cry, and the LORD heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles.* 18 *The LORD is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit.* 19 *Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.* 20 *He keepeth all his bones: not one of them is broken.* 21 *Evil shall slay the wicked: and they that hate the righteous shall be desolate.* 22 *The LORD redeemeth the soul of his servants: and none of them that trust in him shall be desolate.*

We have all heard Holy Ghost filled singers sing Holy Ghost inspired songs, and when the power of the Holy Ghost anoints the singer, we never forget the sweetness of that song, and the power of it's message. Such was the case this midnight when Paul and

Silas ...sang praises unto God. Again these were forward looking, upward looking songs; songs of hope and faith; songs of rejoicing; songs directed to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which is our Hope. {See 1 TIMOTHY 1:1}. In turn these songs of praise unto God lifted the spirits of both Paul and Silas, and gave them relief, and a peace that passeth all understanding despite their pain and suffering, which we just read about in PHILIPPIANS 4:7 above. Again PHILIPPIANS 4:6 & 7 reads: *Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. 7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.* It would be easy to loose one's mind in the torturous situation Paul and Silas were in, yet their hearts and minds were fixed on Jesus Christ, who in turn gave them a peace which passeth all understanding, and hope for their DELIVERANCE.

Having himself experienced such relief in the time of midnight trial, the Apostle Paul was later able to write with solid conviction the following words of hope found in ROMANS. Note as we go through these verses the building block steps of hope that Paul builds upon. In ROMANS 4 Paul writes about Abraham, who believed God, *Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations,...* ROMANS 4:18. In ROMANS 5 Paul brings the lessons learned about Abraham down to you and me, stating the following: ROMANS 5:1 *Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: 2 By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. 3 And not only so, but we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; 4 And patience, experience; and experience, hope: 5 And hope maketh not ashamed; because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.* Then in ROMANS 8 Paul expounds how that we are the sons of God, and potential joint-heirs with Christ. ROMANS 8:16 *The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: 17 And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. 18 For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. 19 For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. 20 For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope, 21 Because the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. 23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. 24 For we are saved by hope: but hope that is seen is not hope: for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for? 25 But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it. 26 Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. 27 And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God. 28 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.* Do you suppose as Paul wrote this that he recalled his Philippian jail experience? In ROMANS 12:12 Paul writes that we are to be: *Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer.* Certainly Paul and Silas were doing all of this in ACTS 16:25. Paul concludes his lessons on hope in ROMANS by stating this in ROMANS 15:13 *Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost.*

Let's now look at the third part of ACTS 16:25. ACTS 16:25 *And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.* In this third part we find that the praying and singing of Paul and Silas was heard by the prisoners. Keep in mind that Paul and Silas were violently thrust into the "inner prison" (ACTS 16:24), away from, it seems, the rest of the prison population. Yet their praying and singing praises was loud enough to be heard by the other prisoners. This tells us that there was conviction in their voices, which could only be there by the power that is found in the Holy Ghost. These weren't weakly spoken words of prayer, and soft spoken

songs, but rather Paul and Silas' loud praying, and singing praises unto the Lord carried a sweet tone to it that these prisoners had never heard before.

ACTS 16:25 *...and the prisoners heard them.* The Greek word translated "heard" here in verse 25 is only found this one time in scripture. It is number 1874 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, and means to listen attentively; in other words to pay close attention to what is being said. One commentator notes that this word "heard" means to listen with pleasure as to a recitation or music, which would be a wondrously attractive entertainment to the prisoners, even though it was midnight. Paul and Silas' loud praying, and heartily singing these midnight praises carried a gospel message that these very same prisoners had never heard before either. Each of these prisoners was given the chance to escape in the next few verses, and none of them choose that path. Why? Because the wonderful gospel message they heard from the voices of Paul and Silas held them spell bound as it were. We will see how this was in the next few verses.

I like the way Ray Quintana brought this out a few weeks ago in a Sunday night lesson, how that Paul and Silas sang praises unto God at midnight, even though they were prisoners, and God enjoyed their singing so much that He sang base. ACTS 16:26 tells us how this was. ACTS 16:26 *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. 28 But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.*

In this portion we are going to examine the earthquake, and what it was that set these captives free. But before we consider how this freedom was attained let us realize an important point that we may have not emphasized earlier. Paul and Silas, and their fellow prisoners are about to be set free from their bonds, and yet though now still in irons and with their feet held fast in the stocks, Paul and Silas were already free! Their freedom was in Christ Jesus, whom they long before believed upon, accepting Him as their personal Saviour. With their faith and trust in Him, they realized that they were free; free from the bondage of sin! Thus Paul and Silas could express their freedom by thankful prayers, and song of rejoicing at this darkest of midnight hours. In other words they had peace that passeth all understanding. PHILIPPIANS 4:7 *And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.* Brother Hill spent a whole Wednesday night Bible study on this one verse on one of the times when did the PHILIPPIANS study. If you have his study book on PHILIPPIANS, it is study 19, and it would do us all good to re-read this study from time to time. What I see here in Paul and Silas is two men full of the Holy Ghost living by faith. Their faith in God over flows out of their mouth with praise and worship. HEBREWS 11:1 defines faith like this: *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.* Think of it like this; by faith Paul and Silas expressed their freedom by thankful prayers, and song of rejoicing at this darkest of midnight hours, and as a result of their faith, God set them free from the prison they were in. Full overcomers, that is men and women full of faith and trust in God, are able to rejoice evermore, even in the times of the darkest midnight trials! Paul and Silas here are examples to us of what a New Testament full overcomer is.

If you have never experienced an earthquake, and I have a couple of different times, there is a deep loud rumble accompanied by some serious shaking with an earthquake. Interestingly we find the word "earthquake" sixteen times in scripture. Sixteen is the number that has to do with LOVE. We all know that 1 CORINTHIANS 13 is known as the LOVE chapter in the Bible. In 1 CORINTHIANS 13 we find sixteen points of LOVE. What does all of this have to do with our text of ACTS 16:26? It was the LOVE of God that set these captives free, and this LOVE here was manifest in the form of an earthquake, and the accompanying miracle that loosed the bands of all the prisoners. The following discussion helps better explain this.

In the first chapter of JOHN we read that Jesus was the Word of God, who was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth. {Study JOHN 1:1-14}. In JOHN 14:6 Jesus tells Thomas in front of all of the disciples: *I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* In JOHN 3:15 & 16 we find this said of Jesus, who is the way, and the truth who dwelt among us, and the life: *That whosoever believeth in*

him should not perish, but have eternal life. 16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Then in JOHN 8:36 we read these words spoken by Jesus, the Word of God, who was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth, who is the way, the truth, and the life: *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.* These very same truths were spoken by Paul and Silas at midnight in that Philippian prison, who by their prayers and wondrous singing made known to the intently listening Philippian prisoners their love for Jesus, and God emphasized His great LOVE for them here by His "earthquake," which shook the foundations of the prison.

Earthquakes in scripture often announce the impending presence of the Lord. In 1 KINGS 19 Elijah was fleeing the wrath of Jezebel. In his flight the angel of the Lord came and fed Elijah, and we read starting in 1 KINGS 19:8 *And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Horeb the mount of God.* 9 *And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD came to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, Elijah?* 10 *And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.* 11 *And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD.* And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake: 12 *And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.* Note here that it was but a short while after the earthquake, which announced the impending presence of the Lord, that the Lord Himself spoke to Elijah.

In MATTHEW 27 at the crucifixion of Jesus we read: 50 *Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.* 51 *And, behold, the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;* 52 *And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,* 53 *And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.* 54 *Now when the centurion, and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.* Here the impending presence of the Lord was announced loud and clear by an earthquake to the centurion, and they that were with him, who were watching the body of Jesus, for they noted ...*Truly this was the Son of God.*

Note the impending presence of resurrected Jesus Himself in the following portion of scripture from MATTHEW 28. MATTHEW 28:1 *In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.* 2 *And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.* 3 *His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:* 4 *And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.* The keepers did shake for the earthquake announced the impending presence of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. 5 *And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.* 6 *He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.* 7 *And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.* 8 *And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.* 9 *And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.* 10 *Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.*

In MATTHEW 24:7, and MARK 13:8, and LUKE 21:11 we read of earthquakes in divers places. These earthquakes are wake up calls that announce the impending soon coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. LUKE 21:28 states: *And when these things begin to come to pass, then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.* To the believer, and especially to the full overcomer, each of these earthquakes are like LOVE notes from our Heavenly Father.

Note our text again: ACTS 16:26 *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.* 28 *But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here.* In verse 26 we see that it was by some miracle manifesting the presence of the Lord that set all the captives free from the bonds that held them prisoner. The earth quake itself would not have loosed the prisoners bands. And yet not one of them escaped, though they all were set free! Again JOHN 8:36 reads: *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.* And so we see that it was Jesus who set the prisoners free. It was Jesus who loosed every one's bands. This Greek word translated "loosed" in ACTS 16:26 is number 447 in the Strong's Greek Concordance. It is only used four times in scripture: twice it is translated "loose," once it is translated "forbear," and once it is translated "leave." The one time it is translated "leave" is in HEBREWS 13:5 where we read: *...for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

In ACTS 5 we read the following account: ACTS 5:12 *And by the hands of the apostles were many signs and wonders wrought among the people; (and they were all with one accord in Solomon's porch.* 13 *And of the rest durst no man join himself to them: but the people magnified them.* 14 *And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women.)* 15 *Insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them.* 16 *There came also a multitude out of the cities round about unto Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed every one.* 17 *Then the high priest rose up, and all they that were with him, (which is the sect of the Sadducees,) and were filled with indignation,* 18 *And laid their hands on the apostles, and put them in the common prison.* 19 *But the angel of the Lord by night opened the prison doors, and brought them forth, and said,* 20 *Go, stand and speak in the temple to the people all the words of this life.* Note here that it was the angel of the Lord that set the apostles free during this midnight situation. Often times in scripture we find that the angel of the Lord is none other than our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself. Thus we see again that it was Jesus who set these captive apostles free from the bonds of this prison. And it was Jesus who set the Philippian prisoners free from their bonds also. ACTS 5:21 continues: *And when they heard that, they entered into the temple early in the morning, and taught.* But the high priest came, and they that were with him, and called the council together, and all the senate of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. 22 *But when the officers came, and found them not in the prison, they returned, and told,* 23 *Saying, The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors: but when we had opened, we found no man within.* 24 *Now when the high priest and the captain of the temple and the chief priests heard these things, they doubted of them whereunto this would grow.* 25 *Then came one and told them, saying, Behold, the men whom ye put in prison are standing in the temple, and teaching the people.*

In LUKE 4 we read about Jesus preaching from ISAIAH 61. LUKE 4:16 *And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.* 17 *And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,* 18 *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,* 19 *To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.* Jesus was reading from ISAIAH 61:1 & 2, which reads like this in our King James translation: *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,...* So again here in ACTS 16:26 we find that it was Jesus who set the prisoners free, but we also read in verse 28 that none of them tried to escape, for Paul cried out *...we are all here.* Perhaps seeing all of the prisoners set free from their

bondage may have triggered the cry of the jail keeper in ACTS 16:30 ... *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* More on this later.

Consider the prisoners here a little further. These prisoners at this Philippian jail have been privileged to hear on this dark midnight encouraging and enlightening Holy ghost inspired words of prayer and praise from suffering Paul and Silas, which they have listened to attentively as we have previously noted. {See again page 344 of these notes}. We also noted that these words of praise, and the songs of rejoicing that Paul and Silas sang were gladly received by the prisoners, for after being set free by the Lord Himself in verse 27, none of the prisoners tried to escape. Remember JOHN 8:36 reads: *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.* And truly these prisoners were now free indeed. So why did they not try to escape? I see a double meaning here in our text of ACTS 16. Physically the prisoners were set free during the time of the earthquake by a force greater than the earthquake. As we noted earlier this force was the Lord Himself releasing prisoners from their physical bondage. Spiritually speaking, these very same prisoners had on this very night received in their ears words from the Apostle Paul himself, and Silas, men full of the Holy Ghost. These words the prisoners heard were in the form of prayers, and songs of praises from these new Holy Ghost filled prisoners Paul and Silas, whose message pricked their sinful hearts to the point that they were ready to receive Jesus into their hearts too. Perhaps they did, and if so, these believing prisoners were then set free from their bonds of sin also. This may very well be why they didn't try to escape, for they were now truly free indeed. Besides where would they go? And why leave the best message they had ever heard?

This reminds me of the story in JOHN 6 when Jesus was on earth talking to his disciples after He had given the great discourse on the bread of life. Starting in JOHN 6:63 we read: *It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.* 64 *But there are some of you that believe not. For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him.* 65 *And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father.* 66 *From that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him.* 67 *Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away?* 68 *Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.* 69 *And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God.* Those prisoners in ACTS 16 had heard for the first time words of eternal life, and it was these words of Paul and Silas that kept them captive, though they were free!

In ACTS 16:27 our focus is turned to the Philippian jailor. ACTS 16:27 *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.* Luke wrote this information to O Theophilus, who was familiar with Roman law, and customs. We are not as familiar, so some explanation is required. Roman law required the same punishment for the jailor that was due the prisoners whom he allowed to escape. If the prisoners were subject to death, then the jailor was due that same punishment should his death row inmate escape. There are a couple of examples of this else where in the book of ACTS.

In ACTS 12 we find Peter taken prisoner with four quaternions of soldiers charged to keep him prisoner. Let's read what happened next in ACTS 12. ACTS 12:5 *Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him.* 6 *And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison.* 7 *And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon him, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from his hands.* 8 *And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me.* 9 *And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision.* 10 *When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him.* 11 *And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath*

delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and from all the expectation of the people of the Jews.18 Now as soon as it was day, there was no small stir among the soldiers, what was become of Peter. 19 And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death. We see here that those who were charged with keeping Peter prisoner were then put to death themselves.

In ACTS 27 we find the Apostle Paul on a ship with other prisoners. When the ship was about to sink during a violent storm we read the following account. ACTS 27:42 And the soldiers' counsel was to kill the prisoners, lest any of them should swim out, and escape. 43 But the centurion, willing to save Paul, kept them from their purpose; and commanded that they which could swim should cast themselves first into the sea, and get to land: 44 And the rest, some on boards, and some on broken pieces of the ship. And so it came to pass, that they escaped all safe to land.

Armed with this information we return to ACTS 16:27 and see that the Philippian jailor knew he was doomed to death if any prisoners escaped. ACTS 16:27 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. The Apostle Paul full of the Holy Ghost on this dark midnight perceived that the jailor was about to take his own life, and cried out ...with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. {ACTS 16:28}. Paul knew that no prisoners had escaped by only one way; the Lord through the Holy Ghost had told him all were still here in the prison.

Our story continues in ACTS 16:29-32: 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. 32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.

Imagine the adrenaline that was flowing in the veins of the jailor having been startled out of a deep sleep at midnight by an earthquake so powerful that it shook the very foundations of the prison, and caused all the prison doors to open. Then to make the assumption that all the prisoners had escaped. Then to proceed to take his own life with his own sword, only to be stopped by the loud cry of the Apostle Paul, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. {ACTS 16:28}. Then shaking and trembling he called for a light.

All sinners sit in darkness, and need to cry out for the true Light to save them. JOHN 1:9 tells us that Jesus is ...the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. JOHN 1:7 further reveals this of the true Light (Jesus): ...that all men through him might believe. LUKE 1:79 tells us that Jesus came to earth ...To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace. And ISAIAH 42:5-7 reads: Thus saith God the LORD, he that created the heavens, and stretched them out; he that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it; he that giveth breath unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein: 6 I the LORD have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand, and will keep thee, and give thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles; 7 To open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house.

Someone gave the jailor a light, then Paul and Silas told him about the True Light, Jesus Christ. This was after the jailor fell down before Paul and Silas, who had no doubt witnessed to him about Jesus as they were being brought into prison. Actually you will recall in ACTS 16:24 that this very same jailor had violently "thrust" Paul and Silas into prison. And yet the jailor knew that these special prisoners, Paul and Silas, were different, and for he perceived that they could help him out of this his darkest midnight situation. So with great respect, and trembling in his voice the jailor states: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Already we see a change in heart concerning the jailor, for what jailor calls the very same prisoners he earlier that day "thrust" like refuse violently into prison, and now addresses them as "Sirs." This earthquake had really got the jailors attention, and for him, he knew the earthquake announced the impending presence of the Lord.

So the jailor cries out in desperation: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" This is the most important question that any sinner could ask: "...what must I do to be saved?"

Notice that it is a very sincere question, and a very personal question. The jailor didn't ask "Sirs, what must we do to be saved?" But rather he asked: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" And how many so-called pastors today could truthfully answer such a simple question? Thank God Paul and Silas gave the jailor the answer he needed to hear. No punches were pulled, and no strings were attached, no list of do's and don'ts were given, rather the truth spoken in love answered this jailors most important question: ACTS 16:31 *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* Recall again a scripture we have quoted many times where Jesus said in JOHN 14:6 *...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* The Philippian jailor knew Paul and Silas were telling him the truth when they said: *...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.*

We are going to look at those two words "believe on" for a moment. As a commercial airline pilot I still come across people who tell me this is their first time flying. In other words they have believed in airplanes all of their life, but this is the first time they have actually trusted enough to "believe on" an airplane to have an up lifting experience for themselves. (Pun intended). That simple illustration pales in comparison to the up lifting experience one has when they believe on the Lord Jesus Christ to save their sins! In our numbers study we learned that the number fourteen has to do with DELIVERANCE or SALVATION. There are fourteen scriptures that mention the phrase "believe on," and all of the fourteen scriptures point the way to SALVATION.

Here are the fourteen scriptures: JOHN 1:12 *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:* JOHN 6:29 *Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* JOHN 7:39 *(But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)* JOHN 9:35 *Jesus heard that they had cast him out; and when he had found him, he said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?* JOHN 9:36 *He answered and said, Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him? (37 And Jesus said unto him, Thou hast both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee.)* JOHN 11:48 *If we let him thus alone, all men will believe on him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.* JOHN 17:20 *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word;* ACTS 16:31 *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* ACTS 19:4 *Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus.* ROMANS 4:24 *But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;* PHILIPPIANS 1:29 *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake;* 1 TIMOTHY 1:16 *Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting.* 1 JOHN 3:23 *And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.* 1 JOHN 5:13 *These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*

You may have noticed in these fourteen scriptures the phrase "believe on" was used fifteen times, for "believe on" was found twice in 1 JOHN 5:13. Fifteen is the number of REST. Those that have believed on Jesus for their SALVATION have received REST for their souls. Notice how Jesus Himself stated this in MATTHEW 11:28 & 29 -- *Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.*

Note again what Paul and Silas told the Philippian jailor in ACTS 16:31 *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* The Apostle Paul also wrote in ROMANS 10:9 *That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.* Note that there is no might, or maybe, or possibly, or could be, or term

limits, in the words "thou shalt." "Thou shalt" means it will definitely happen: *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,...*

ACTS 16:29 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. 32 And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. In verse 32 we see that Paul and Silas didn't give their own opinion, but rather fed the new believers "*the word of the Lord.*" I looked up this phrase "*the word of the Lord,*" and found it 16 (LOVE) times in scripture. Consider the Apostle Peter for a moment. In JOHN 21:15-17 we have that famous portion where Jesus asked Peter three times "do you love me?" That was ...*the word of the Lord...* speaking directly unto the heart of Peter. Peter later wrote in 1 PETER 1:25 *But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.* Peter was privileged to hear the word of the Lord from our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Himself, and often times realized afterward how powerful the word of the Lord was. For example in ACTS 11:1-18 Peter was defending himself concerning the fact that Gentile believers were also filled with the Holy Ghost because of his ministry. In ACTS 11:16 Peter states: *Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost.* Way before this time Peter was told by Jesus in LUKE 22:34 ...*I tell thee, Peter, the cock shall not crow this day, before that thou shalt thrice deny that thou knowest me.* Reading on in LUKE 22:61 we find this statement made after the cock crew: *And the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter. And Peter remembered the word of the Lord, how he had said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.* So we see that when Peter penned 1 PETER 1:25 there was great deep meaning in these words: *But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.* And this was the same word by which the gospel was preached unto the Philippian jailor, and his house by Paul and Silas: ACTS 16:32 *And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.* In a similar vane HEBREWS 4:12 tells us: *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 discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

ACTS 16:33 & 34 tells us this about the Philippian jailor: *And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. 34 And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.*

Recall from a few pages ago how Paul and Silas were singing midnight praises though facing the darkest midnight time of their life. And now the Lord had DELIVERED them from their midnight crisis, and had given a new midnight crisis to the Philippian jailor. Now the Lord had DELIVERED the jailor from his midnight crisis too! All involved here could now Rejoice evermore as A THESSALONIANS 5:16 tells us to do. In simple gratitude the jailor washed Paul and Silas' stripes. ISAIAH 53:5 tells us this concerning Jesus: *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.* That midnight the Philippian jailor and his house were healed (forgiven) from their sins, and they had never felt better in their lives. I imagine that Paul and Silas felt nearly as good themselves. Out of gratitude the jailor had washed Paul and Silas' stripes, and then in verse 34 we read again: *And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.* The prisoners Paul and Silas couldn't have been treated better. Neither could the Philippian jailor, for now he was treated with the good old gospel message preached from the mouth of the Apostle Paul himself. Thus the Philippian jailor and his household become a foundation part of the Philippian assembly. It is kind of ironic once again to find that the foundation of the Philippian prison was shaken on the same night that the foundation of the Philippian church was laid. 1 CORINTHIANS 3:11 *For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* Paul and Silas established the Philippian jailor and his house that night on the solid foundation of Jesus Christ. Also that midnight the town of Philippi got a new jailor, for 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 tells us: *Therefore if any man*

be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Paul and Silas released from Prison

Next in ACTS 16:35 we read: *And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.*

I am always amazed at how much information is packaged in small portions of scripture, if we only will let the Holy Ghost reveal this to our open hearts of faith. While meditating upon these last few verses in ACTS 16, I realized that there is a significant amount of change that is recorded here from one day to the next. PROVERBS 27:1 even tells us: *Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.* So we know that none of us know what a day will bring forth. A lot of things changed in Philippi from one day unto the next here in scripture in the life of the Apostle Paul. Let's examine these changes a little closer.

Here in ACTS 16:35 we read first come upon the phrase "when it was day." The phrase "when it was day" is found five times in scripture, and by now we should all know that five is the number of GRACE. There isn't a day that goes by that we are not shown the GRACE of God, nor is there a day that goes by that we don't need the GRACE of God. There is another five letter word that defines GRACE, and the GRACE of God to us, and that five letter word is JESUS. (Of course we all know that JESUS is far more than a five letter word, and no disrespect toward JESUS is intended here, as will become evident as you read on.) GRACE then should point us to Jesus, and we can not, and should not think of GRACE without thinking of Jesus. The Apostle John couldn't tell us who Jesus was without using the word GRACE either. The Apostle John wrote in JOHN 1 the following words about Jesus being the epitome of GRACE. In JOHN 1:14 we read: *And the Word (JESUS) was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.* Never before, and never since has anyone come into this world "full of GRACE and truth." Yet we can all accept Jesus as our own personal Saviour, and have Him "full of GRACE and truth" dwelling with in us. JOHN 1:17 further tells us this about Jesus: *For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.* The point I am trying to emphasize here is that GRACE and Jesus are words that depend upon each other. GRACE can not exist without Jesus, and Jesus is GRACE, full of GRACE and truth. No wonder the Apostle Paul expressed his thankfulness for Jesus, and the GRACE of Jesus like this in 2 CORINTHIANS 9:15 *Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift.* Note also in the following verses penned by Paul that we see GRACE and Jesus inseparable. ROMANS 3:24 *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:...* . EPHESIANS 2:8 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:...* . These are just a couple of many such scriptures. The Apostle Paul too couldn't tell us who Jesus was without using the word GRACE either. On you own take the time to research the following: the Apostle Paul started his introductions, and ended all of his epistles conclusions with the mention of Jesus, and with the mention of GRACE, again showing that these two five letter words go hand in hand. (The first mention of the name of Jesus in HEBREWS is in HEBREWS 2:9, where we also find the word GRACE mentioned in HEBREWS for the first time; HEBREWS 2:9 *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.*)

The phrase "when it was day" (ACTS 16:35) should also trigger another five letter word to come to mind: LIGHT. Here again we can not think of LIGHT without also thinking of Jesus. JOHN 8:12 and 9:5 both tell us that Jesus is the LIGHT of the world. We first read of LIGHT in GENESIS 1. In GENESIS 1 we read: *3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. 5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night.* Sister Bodie notes here that LIGHT was not created that day, but rather was manifest upon the earth on that first day, and that darkness had to flee from the LIGHT. She goes on to note here in verse 4 that God divides LIGHT from darkness. We all also know that the rising of the sun separates light from darkness, night from day. There is a Greek