

*mercy endureth for ever: 21 And gave their land for an heritage: for his mercy endureth for ever: 22 Even an heritage unto Israel his servant: for his mercy endureth for ever. 23 Who remembered us in our low estate: for his mercy endureth for ever: 24 And hath redeemed us from our enemies: for his mercy endureth for ever. 25 Who giveth food to all flesh: for his mercy endureth for ever. 26 O give thanks unto the God of heaven: for his mercy endureth for ever.* I can imagine Paul and Silas singing this ACTS 16 during their **midnight** test!

Next we will read a few verses from PSALMS 147 & 148, seeing again **midnight** light in the stars. PSALMS 147:1 *Praise ye the LORD: for it is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely. 2 The LORD doth build up Jerusalem: he gathereth together the outcasts of Israel. 3 He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds. 4 He telleth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names. 5 Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite. 6 The LORD lifteth up the meek: he casteth the wicked down to the ground.*

7 *Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God.* Was verse 7 the inspiration behind what the Apostle Paul wrote in EPHESIANS 5:19, and COLOSSIANS 3:16? EPHESIANS 5:19 *Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.* COLOSSIANS 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.* PSALMS 148:1 *Praise ye the LORD. Praise ye the LORD from the heavens: praise him in the heights. 2 Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts. 3 Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light. 4 Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. 5 Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created. 6 He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.* The stars, who God has numbered, and calls them by name, are all stars of light; **midnight** light, and they point to the fact ...*that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all...* 1 JOHN 1:5.

The point of discussing **midnight** light in this portion of our **midnight** Bible stories study is simply to note that since creation it has always been God's plan for we believers not to be left alone in the darkness of **midnight** times. He gave us light, even **midnight** light, and in the Lord He gave us His everlasting light. Yes indeed the darkest of times brought forth the heroes of faith, and bridal Saints **midnight** tests will in the end be manifest as her light as noted in REVELATION 21:11.

### Paul and Silas

There are several **midnight** Bible stories associated with the Apostle Paul, and the first one we will look further into is the one where Paul and Silas are cast into the Philippian jail. We find this story in the 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of ACTS, which is rich with background information as to when, and how the Philippian church was first established.

In the closing verse of ACTS 15 we find the Apostle Paul mentioning to Barnabas in ACTS 15:36 *...Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.* Barnabas wanted to take his nephew John Mark with them, but Paul didn't think this was a good idea as John Mark had previously left Paul and Barnabas when they were on their first missionary journey, so as you can read in ACTS 15:38 & 39 there was a sharp disagreement between Paul and Barnabas over taking John Mark on another missionary journey, so much so that Paul and Barnabas went separate ways from that point forward. So instead of going on a second missionary journey with Barnabas, we read in ACTS 15:40 that Paul instead took Silas with him as he proceeded on his now famous second missionary journey.

So where did Silas come from? In ACTS 15 after the famous conference in Jerusalem we find Silas introduced in the following account. ACTS 15:22 *Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: 23 And they wrote letters by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren send greeting unto the*

*brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia: 24 Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: 25 It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul, 26 Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27 We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. 28 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; 29 That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well. 30 So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle: 31 Which when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation. 32 And Judas and Silas, being prophets also themselves, exhorted the brethren with many words, and confirmed them. 33 And after they had tarried there a space, they were let go in peace from the brethren unto the apostles. 34 Notwithstanding it pleased Silas to abide there still. 35 Paul also and Barnabas continued in Antioch, teaching and preaching the word of the Lord, with many others also.*

In this account we learn that Silas was one of the chief men among the brethren, which were at Jerusalem, and he was chosen to go with Paul and Barnabas back up to Antioch with the letter spoken of in verses 24-29 of ACTS 15. In ACTS 15:32 we find that Silas was also a prophet from Jerusalem, who also exhorted those in Antioch, Syria with the consolation found in this letter. When given the opportunity to return to Jerusalem, Silas chose to stay with those in Antioch, Syria. At this point in time Silas was also learning Paul's gospel message. When the opportunity presented itself for Silas to go on Paul's second missionary journey, Silas quickly accepted. ACTS 15:40 *And Paul chose Silas, and departed, being recommended by the brethren unto the grace of God. 41 And he went through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches.* As they were confirming the churches we read in ACTS 16:4 & 5 -- *And as they went through the cities, they delivered them the decrees for to keep, that were ordained of the apostles and elders which were at Jerusalem. 5 And so were the churches established in the faith, and increased in number daily.* So we see that this second missionary of Paul's included Silas, and they both were used of the Holy Ghost to further establish the churches found on Paul's first missionary when he was traveling with Barnabas, thus Paul's wish of ACTS 15:36 was being accomplished. Recall that Paul had said in ACTS 15:36 *...Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do.* And we have found that these churches were being established in the faith by the Apostle Paul, and their attendance numbers increased daily.

Before we move on let's note something of further importance concerning Silas. Silas is found by two names in scripture, Silas and Silvanus. Luke calls him Silas, and Paul and Peter address him as Silvanus. Silvanus is the Latin for Silas, and Silas is the name we have for him thirteen times in ACTS, from ACTS 15:22 until ACTS 18:5. Silas is one of the main characters on Paul's second missionary journey. Four times we find Silas in scripture as Silvanus, which means his name is found in scripture seventeen times. Seventeen is the number that has to do with VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS, and certainly Silas many times demonstrated that fact in his life. You don't sing praises unto God at **midnight** while wrongly strung up as a prisoner without having complete VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS, which is exactly what Silas did in ACTS 16:25, but we are getting a little ahead of ourselves here. Silas and the Latin Silvanus derives a meaning of "a wood" or "woody," coming from the Latin sylva. ACTS 16:37 indicates that Silas was a Roman citizen, just like Paul. Peter makes mention of Silas calling him Silvanus in 1 PETER 5:12, again confirming that he was closely associated with those of the church at Jerusalem, and a long time acquaintance of Peter. In 1 PETER 1:1 & 2 Peter addresses people that Silas would have met on his missionary journey with the Apostle Paul. 1 PETER 1:1 *Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, 2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.* In 1 PETER 5:12 Peter

acknowledges Silas when he writes: *By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.*

We didn't read ACTS 16:1-3, which you can study further on your own, however in these verses Paul and Silas came to Derbe and Lystra, cities previously visited by Paul and Barnabas on Paul's first missionary journey, and on this second missionary journey Paul added a young man named Timothy to travel with him and Silas. What happens in the next few verses is very profound, and gives us often overlooked background information on what took place next in the early stages of Paul's second missionary journey, which now includes traveling companions Silas and Timothy. 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.*

At first reading it seems like nothing happened during this part of the journey. Here Paul, Silas, and young Timothy first visit Phrygia. Phrygia means: "dry, barren, parched." Within the boundaries of Phrygia are the cities of Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colosse. This is the first time Paul has visited this region. Next he came to the region of Galatia for the first time. Sister Bodie and Brother Copley note that Galatia means "milky" showing their character of childishness, being able to take only the milk, and not the meat of the Word, which is expressive of folk under the law. Luke records nothing about the events that took place on this missionary journey *...throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia...* however we know that Paul and his group were able to lead some to the Lord here on this first trip to these parts. How do we know this? Because ACTS 18:23 records that on the beginning of his third missionary journey some years later, Paul *...went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening all the disciples.* "All the disciples" here means those *...throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia...* that became believers on Paul's first visit there, which took place here in ACTS 16:6. So we see that something did happen on this part of Paul's second missionary journey, but Luke doesn't record this information at this point in time.

Next we read in ACTS 16:6 & 7 that Paul and his company *...were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.* This particular Asia is Roman Asia, which corresponding closely to the regions of western Turkey today. They *...were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia.* Consequently nothing happened there at that point in time. Next they came to Mysia. Mysia is a region north of Roman Asia, which included the cities of Pergamos, Troas, and Assos. Again nothing is recorded of happening at Mysia either. From Mysia, *...they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.* Bithynia is the region just South of the Black Sea.

We have just read that Paul, Silas and Timothy had been *...forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia...* and had *...assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.* This all may seem strange to us especially considering that we are talking about the Apostle Paul here, and his being on a second missionary journey, whose purpose it was to spread the gospel of the grace of God, and in the process establish churches. What is going on here? Brother Copley wrote a good commentary on this portion of scripture, stating: "...God has a certain time for each plan and person; for He is calling out a people for His Name, and He knows when the people are ready for the truth. These may seem like strange words, *...forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach...*" *...but the Spirit suffered them not.*" Happy for us to be so well acquainted with the Spirit's voice and be so yielded to Him that He can make us know His will. Because of this lack, many a fruitless word has been spoken, many a vain trip made. It is not enough to say, "Well, He knows my heart." We get no reward for that. We should know God's heart concerning us. If Paul knew it, we may know it. Let there be in us the perfect will of the Lord, no matter what the cost to us, or to others, and He will see that we have it. Then, too, we shall prove that it is exceedingly beyond all that we could have asked, or even thought. "Limit not the Holy One" by your own meager conception of His will." {End of quote from Brother Copley}. Brother Hill used to like to have us sing the chorus – "Let the Lord have His way, in your heart every day. There's no peace, there's no rest, till the Lord has His way. Put your hand in His hand. Rest securely in His plan. There's no peace, there's no rest, till the Lord

has His way.” Obviously Paul had learned that lesson, the question is have you too learned that same lesson?

Even though it may seem like nothing of real value has happened during this portion of Paul’s second missionary journey, I can assure you that a gold mine full of eternal, and internal things were happening. Paul was learning patience. Silas and Timothy were learning Paul’s gospel one on one, being taught daily from the Apostle Paul himself as they traveled slowly along, and in this process eternal riches were being acquired by all three. A closer bond was taking place between each of them, and the Lord. We may never know the value of what took place in their hearts and lives during this time, but we do know that they were in the will of the Lord, and this valuable time was not wasted. There may have not been much preaching going on since they were “...*forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach*,...” during this time frame found in ACTS 16:6-8, but two future Church Apostles were receiving their education! Let that thought sink in for a moment. At this point in time there was not one word of Paul’s fourteen epistles yet penned, yet Silas and Timothy were learning Paul’s gospel message from the mouth of the Apostle Paul himself, much the same as Barnabas had been taught Paul’s gospel on his previous missionary journey. By the time they arrive at Troas in ACTS 16:8 Silas would have traveled more than 800 miles with Paul, and Timothy would have traveled about 500 miles distance. Obviously their hearts were *...being knit together in love, and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the acknowledgement of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ; In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge...* as Paul later wrote in COLOSSIANS 2:2 & 3. Paul, Silas, and Timothy were truly having good gospel fellowship during this time. Later in life Paul would write this in a letter to Timothy: *But thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, longsuffering, charity, patience...* 2 TIMOTHY 3:10. Timothy got to fully know Paul’s doctrine, Paul’s manner of life, Paul’s purpose, Paul’s faith, Paul’s longsuffering, and Paul’s patience during this lengthy portion of Paul’s second missionary journey when it seemed that nothing was really going on. It was times like this that also later inspired Paul, and Silas, and Timothy to add their thoughts to the Thessalonians that we read in 2 THESSALONIANS 3:5 -- *And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ*. Recall from your own studies that both epistles addressed to the Thessalonians were written from these three: Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, all who were by this time Church Apostles.

ACTS 16:8 reads: *And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas*. Troas was the chief seaport between Roman Asia, and Macedonia. Paul will visit Troas about four or five times again in his life, but this visit was too short for him to establish a church. Antioch, Syria to Troas is around an eight-hundred mile journey over land the way Paul and Silas went. By comparison, settlers in our country, who traveled overland on the Oregon Trail, covered a distance of about 1500 miles. Some of them rode, but most of them walked, just like Paul, Silas and Timothy did on their journey. The Oregon Trail travelers would leave the Missouri River in March or early April, and not get to Oregon until at least late November at the earliest, or even later. Eight hundred miles on their journey would put them in the middle of Wyoming in the middle of July, a five months journey. We can assume that Paul and Silas were at least five months into their journey, and probably more, for they stopped and preached in a number of cities, and spent time with the Saints of these cities. I imagine that Paul and Silas were probably seven or eight months along on this journey when they finally reached Troas, and Timothy had probably been with them at least five months.

In all our **midnight** Bible stories it seems there are several **midnight** events that take place before we get to the **midnight** Bible story we are studying about. ACTS 16:9 is one of these **midnight** events. ACTS 16:9 *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*. So much information is contained in this one verse that we must pay close attention to what is taking place here. This was a turning point on Paul’s second missionary journey. In the previous 500 miles it seems little was accomplished, yet we know that Silas and Timothy became established in Paul’s gospel message during this time. Paul, Silas, and Timothy were also learning patience, and longsuffering, valuable



and necessary traits of a full overcomer. Now in verse 9 we find direction of the Lord that will lead the Apostle Paul unto the places He wants him to go, and we will find that once this door is opened, it takes the Apostle Paul essentially the rest of his life to “help us.” (quoting from the vision).

ACTS 16:9 *And a vision appeared to Paul in the night;...* . We obviously are not going to rush through this 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of ACTS to discuss the heart of our **midnight** Bible story found in this chapter because we will miss many of the rich nuggets left for us along the way if we go too fast. Let’s address the topic of visions for a moment. The word “vision,” is found seventy-nine times in scripture, and the word “visions” twenty-four times. A good Bible study would be to look up these verses. After a quick review of these scriptures you will find that the Lord does not grant a vision for entertainment purposes, but rather to reveal God’s far reaching plan, and purpose. By definition the Greek word *horama* *hor'-am-ah*, number 3705 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, translated “vision” means: a sight divinely granted in an ecstasy or in a sleep, a vision. In Wednesday nights Bible study Pastor O’Dorisio noted that visions are a means of revealing to us the mystery of God’s will, and he gave EPHESIANS 1:9 as a scripture for this thought. EPHESIANS 1:9 *Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself.* The mystery of God’s will was revealed unto the Apostle Paul so that he could teach us this mystery in his gospel, which we know as Paul’s gospel. We will discuss some of these visions Paul had momentarily, but before we do take note of the following points concerning visions.

The first mention of a vision is in GENESIS 15:1, where we read: *After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward.* A vision can be either in a dream, or when one is awake, and here in GENESIS 15 the Abrahamic Covenant was further revealed to Abram as was first made known to him in GENESIS 12. GENESIS 12:1 *Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father’s house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.* In GENESIS 15 God promised Abram an heir, and future generations in number as great as the stars in heaven, and a land which the heirs of Abraham still have not yet possessed!

We find the word “vision” mentioned twenty-two times in DANIEL in nineteen verses. Nineteen is the number of FAITH, and twenty-two the number of LIGHT. Obviously Daniel was a great man of faith, and one of the greatest **midnight** Bible stories found in scripture is found in DANIEL 6 about Daniel in the Lion’s den. Perhaps we will study that story next Lord willing. How much LIGHT was Daniel revealed in his different visions? We still study the things Daniel was shown in his vision of DANIEL 9:24. Daniel too was shown many things of God’s will in his visions, and DANIEL 12:4 explains: *But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end: many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.* We are living in these days that Daniel saw in his visions because once again, the Lord does not grant a vision for entertainment purposes, but rather to reveal God’s far reaching plan, and purpose.

Recall in ACTS 10, which we studied in our **midnight** Bible story of Peter’s escape from Herod’s prison, both Cornelius, and Peter had a vision. Cornelius in his vision was told to send men to Joppa to seek out Peter, and have him come to Cornelius’ house. Peter in his vision was told to go with the men Cornelius sent to Cornelius’ house. God’s purpose and far reaching plan here was to introduce the Gentiles to the gift of the Holy Ghost, which they received as Peter told them about the Lord. And to the astonishment of Peter and those with him, the Holy Ghost fell on all of these Gentiles as they heard the word of God Peter spoke, and they spake with tongues the same as did the Jews on the day of Pentecost in ACTS 2. This was just the beginning of what we still enjoy today as believing Gentiles, the opportunity to receive the Holy Ghost just as they first did at Cornelius’ house.

The Apostle Paul was familiar with visions. Paul wrote in 2 CORINTHIANS 12:1 *It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.* We should be

grateful to the Lord that he did have these visions, and revelations of the Lord. In ACTS 26:19 Paul is before King Agrippa recalling his conversion when he saw Jesus in the way, which he terms a “*heavenly vision*.” That was the day Paul got saved. Three days later in ACTS 9:12 we find that Paul saw in a vision a man named Ananias coming to him there at Damascus so that he could once again receive his sight. Shortly there after Ananias found Paul, and laid his hands upon Paul and immediately Paul received his sight, and he was at that time also filled with the Holy Ghost. So Paul’s natural sight returned, and his Spiritual sight became 20/20 after he received the gift of the Holy Ghost. We are the beneficiaries of what the Holy Ghost showed Paul! In ACTS 18:9 while at Corinth for the first time we read of another vision that Paul had: *Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace:...* . Afterwards the church at Corinth was established, and we still benefit from what Paul taught them, and wrote to them about in 1 & 2 CORINTHIANS. In ACTS 23:11 we read of another real vision that Paul had during a very dark trial in his life: *And the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul: for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome*. This vision gave Paul direction for the remaining years of his life. Another such time when faced with a distressing situation, a dark **midnight** and in a ship that was about to sink, Paul saw another vision. This is recorded for us in ACTS 27 like this: *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*. And that night 276 souls were saved from certain death! Thus we see that the Apostle Paul was very familiar with visions from the Lord, and these were profound moments in his life, and part of God’s far reaching plan, and purpose, which still reach down to you, and me.

So when we read in ACTS 16:9 *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...* the results of God’s far reaching plan, and purpose here still reach down to you, and me, and also help us. Note the word “Macedonia” is found two times in this verse, and two is the number pointing to SUFFICIENT WITNESS, or SUFFICIENT TESTIMONY. There was SUFFICIENT WITNESS in this **midnight** vision that the Lord was directing Paul, and those traveling with him, to go over into Macedonia. The word Macedonia is used twenty-six times in scripture, and twenty-six is the number associated with the GOSPEL, and the GOOD NEWS of the GOSPEL. The GOOD NEWS of Paul’s GOSPEL message was exactly the kind of help the man of Macedonia was requesting in Paul’s vision.

In this **midnight** vision Paul saw a man dressed as a man from Macedonia would dress, and Paul recognized him as a man from Macedonia, though not a specific individual, but a collective “us.” This man requested with a sense of urgency, help, aid and assistance in the time of dire need: *...Come over into Macedonia, and help us*. Interestingly this Greek word (number 997 in the Strong’s Greek Concordance) translated “help” here is only used eight times in scripture. {MATTHEW 15:25; MARK 9:22 & 24; ACTS 16:9 & 21:28; 2 CORINTHIANS 6:2; HEBREWS 2:18 and REVELATION 12:16}. Eight is such an important number with several meanings, which we have covered many times in lessons past, all of which can closely be associated with Jesus. Eight has a meaning of NEW CREATION, and 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 tells us that born again believers are a NEW CREATION in Christ Jesus. Eight has a meaning of NEW BIRTH. JOHN 3:7 tells us in part: *Ye must be born again*. 1 JOHN 5:1 tells us: *Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God...* . Eight also has a meaning of NEW BEGINNING. 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 reads: *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new*. Eight also has a meaning of RESURRECTION. Jesus said in JOHN 11:25 *...I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:...* . Eight is also the number that points to the BRIDE OF CHRIST. JOHN 3:29 in part tells us: *He that hath the bride is the bridegroom:...* . Jesus is the bridegroom. So we see that all these meanings of the

number eight also witnesses of the true Light Christ Jesus. When this Macedonian man requests “help” in Paul’s vision, he is requesting that Paul come over into Macedonia and witness of the true Light Christ Jesus. The Apostle Paul understood the urgency of this vision’s request for help, and he later quoted ISAIAH 49:8 when he penned 2 CORINTHIANS 6:2 expressing the kind of help requested here. 2 CORINTHIANS 6:2 (*For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.*) If you stop and think about it further, you will realize that the epistles Paul later wrote because of his being called over into Macedonia to “help us” would include both his letters of 1 and 2 THESSALONIANS; both his letters of 1 and 2 CORINTHIANS; his epistle unto the PHILIPPIANS. He also made mention of this in 1 TIMOTHY 1:3, and all of these epistles are written to encourage “us,” and teach “us” how to have God’s best. (1 TIMOTHY 1:3 *As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine.*) Thus Paul wrote in 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1 *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.* To the Macedonians at Philippi Paul later wrote in PHILIPPIANS 3:17 *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.* None of these things would have been written had not Paul followed the vision, and ...*Come over into Macedonia, and help us...* ACTS 16:9.

ACTS 16:10 adds another layer to our **midnight** Bible story. Recall before this **midnight** vision that Paul had in ACTS 16:9 not much had happened in nearly five hundred miles as far as establishing churches were concerned. Then we read in ACTS 16:10 *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.* This verse emphasizes the fact that assuredly the Lord had called Paul and his company to preach the gospel unto them of Macedonia. Note the phrase “*assuredly gathering*” here. It comes from the Greek word *sumbibazo* (number 4822 in the Strong’s Greek Concordance), and is only used in six New Testament scriptures. {ACTS 9:22 (proving) & 16:10; 1 CORINTHIANS 2:16 (instruct); EPHESIANS 4:16 (compacted); COLOSSIANS 2:2 & 2:19 (knit together)}. The thought conveyed here is to be joined together, or be knit together, or united together with the same opinion or conclusion, which in this particular case was to know for a fact that the Lord had called Paul and his small group of travelers into Macedonia for the express purpose of preaching the gospel unto the hungry needy souls there. They were certainly convinced that the Lord had called them into Macedonia, and they immediately endeavored to go there.

Here in ACTS 16:10 we also find the words “we,” and “us” used for the first time in reference to the author Luke. This brings up a lot of questions, like how was it that Luke was in Troas at this time? Was this pre planned? How long did Luke know the Apostle Paul before this time? These kinds of questions are not answered for us in scripture. Obviously Luke knew Paul before this time, and became a believer before this time. Luke wrote the gospel record of LUKE, and the book of ACTS. Both of these books are addressed to Theophilus, another man we know even less about, but who is thought to be one of the main men from the church at Antioch, Syria. It is thought that Luke may have become aquatinted with the Apostle Paul during one of his many lengthy stays in Antioch before this time. So Luke joins Paul, and Timothy, and Silas here in ACTS 10, ...*assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.* Who was going to do the preaching in Macedonia? All of them!!! Luke continues the narrative in ACTS with “we,” and “us” until ACTS 16:40 and 17:1 when once again “they” is used in reference to the Apostle Paul and those who were then traveling with him. Obviously Luke was not a part of the “they,” having stayed behind at Philippi. It is important to note that Luke remained in Philippi, and apparently stayed there until the time frame of ACTS 20:5 & 6. This would be about six years in the life of Luke of which we know very little about except for the time he was with Paul. However if Luke did remain in Philippi for these six or so years he would have been very helpful in establishing the church at Philippi, which Paul founded in this 16<sup>th</sup> chapter of ACTS. Luke again joins up with the Apostle Paul in ACTS 20:5 & 6, which reads: *These going before tarried for us at Troas. 6 And we sailed away from Philippi after the days of unleavened bread, and came unto them to Troas in five days; where we abode seven*

*days.* Note the “we,” and “us” once again in these verses indicating that Luke had joined the Apostle Paul in his travels, and stays with him for the rest of his life, which was probably ten years or so beyond the time frame of ACTS 20. This means that Luke was with Paul during the time of his arrest in Jerusalem, during the two years at Caesarea, during the ship wreck on the way to Rome in ACTS 27, and even with Paul at Rome in ACTS 28, and the time beyond the book of ACTS. In 2 TIMOTHY 4:11 in his closing words written unto Timothy Paul writes: *Only Luke is with me...* showing us that Luke was with Paul at the conclusion of Paul’s life. Again if it wasn’t for Luke we wouldn’t have the gospel according to LUKE, nor the book of ACTS, in total 52 very important chapters of Holy Ghost inspired scripture!!!

ACTS 16:10 *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. 11 Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis; 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.*

Once again a tremendous amount of information is contained in verses 11 & 12. Recall that in the travels between Lystra and Troas much time has expired without so much as a mention to anyone getting saved, nor has there been any mention of even one church being established. Several months have come and gone, and the record we have from ACTS 16:6-8 tells us that Paul was forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Roman Asia, because the Spirit suffered them not to go to certain places there at that time. Now in one verse, (ACTS 16:11) Paul and company travel a distance of approximately 150 miles in two days, and actually in parts of two days! Under normal circumstances the trip from Troas to Neapolis (Philippi’s sea port) would have taken a week or longer. However Paul and his company caught an unusual southeasterly wind on the ship they were on, and covered the 150 miles distance in two days! Let that sink in for a moment that they traveled 150 miles in less than two whole days. When the Lord assuredly calls someone to proceed to a certain place, as was the case here, the Lord also provides the expedited passage. The opposite journey with prevailing winds took five days in ACTS 20:6! So we note how unusual this trip of ACTS 16:11 was. It just goes to show us that when God has a plan, nothing can stop Him in expediting the thing. Time, speed and distance mean nothing with God. Recall Philip was caught away from the eunuch in ACTS 8:39 by the Spirit of the Lord, and was next found in Azotus some forty miles away! With God nothing is impossible. Recall these scriptures: GENESIS 18:14 *Is any thing too hard for the LORD?* JEREMIAH 32:27 *Behold, I am the LORD, the God of all flesh: is there any thing too hard for me?* MARK 10:27 *And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.* LUKE 1:37 *For with God nothing shall be impossible.* Full overcomers know these facts, and believe these scriptures.

The journey of 150 miles described in ACTS 16:11 & 12 took them from Troas, across the Aegean unto the Island of Samothracia, a conspicuous landmark to sailors. Samothracia means: “a sign of rags,” obviously a place of poverty and great need. History records that this small 20 mile wide island was settled by Greeks, who in time built monuments to Greek gods. On the Northwest side of the island is a small seaport, which would have afforded the ship Paul and his company were on relief from the strong southeasterly wind that had endured all day long.

The next day Paul’s ship sets sail and comes to the sea port of Neapolis, which means: “new city.” Neapolis had a good sea port. Neapolis was ten miles from Philippi. The reason we don’t read of the Apostle Paul stopping and preaching at Samothracia or Neapolis was because in the vision Paul was called to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called him to preach the gospel unto them of Macedonia, not them of Samothracia or Neapolis. {See again ACTS 16:10}.

We find next in ACTS 16:12 tells us that Paul and company went from Neapolis *...to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia, and a colony: and we were in that city abiding certain days.* Philippi was the chief city in that part of Macedonia, and was the place God had called Paul to initially preach the gospel in Macedonia. Philippi means: “lover of horses,” or “lovers of the race horse,” which carries with it the meaning to us of “lovers of the race course.” Keep in mind as

we study this, that the church at Philippi had not yet been established. This portion of ACTS lays the foundation upon which the church at Philippi was built, and that foundation being Paul's gospel. Paul himself notes in 1 CORINTHIANS 3 how a wise master builder builds, stating in 1 CORINTHIANS 3:10 & 11: *According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* So we see that the Apostle Paul laid the foundation here at Philippi building upon the chief corner stone Jesus Christ. ISAIAH 28:16 *Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste.* EPHESIANS 2:20 *And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone.* Some years later Paul will write from prison an epistle to the PHILIPPIANS, known to us as the joy book of the Bible. Brother Hill did a Bible study on PHILIPPIANS several years ago, which was put in print as a study book on PHILIPPIANS. Hopefully this study book is one of the treasures in your library. Brother Hill noted in his study that the epistle of PHILIPPIANS has no doctrines to expound, nor any errors to refute. Rather the book of PHILIPPIANS was written to encourage the heart of every potential full overcomer, and "lover of the race course," who individually wants God's best in their own life! People who agree with the Apostle Paul when he writes in PHILIPPIANS 3:8-14: *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. 12 Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus. 13 Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.*

Having now been introduced to the important things that takes place in the hearts of these yet to be Philippian Saints, let's return in our thinking to the very first day that the Apostle Paul arrived at Philippi, knowing only that the Lord had called him to go into Macedonia for the express purpose to preach the gospel unto them, and all of this was in response to the vision of ACTS 16:9 where the man from Macedonia prayed: *Come over into Macedonia, and help us.* Interestingly one of the meanings of Macedonia is "extended land," which expresses to us the thought of the important message that Paul preached in Macedonia extends even down to the fertile land of our hearts today.

Philippi, one of the chief cities of Macedonia, is noted in ACTS 16:12 to be a colony. This means it was a Roman colony, which further means it afforded Roman citizens certain privileges, which will become a factor for the Apostle Paul later in this chapter. Some of the privileges of Roman citizens were: the exemption from scourging, and except in extreme cases, the freedom from arrest, and the right of appeal from the magistrate to the Emperor. Eventually in life the Apostle Paul would use all of these privileges, for Paul was a Roman citizen himself. {Study ACTS 16:37 & 38, and ACTS 22:25-29}. We find Paul and company in Philippi the rest of the time frame of ACTS 16. So think of it like this: Paul and Silas traveled about one thousand miles in ACTS 16:1-12, and zero miles in the rest of the chapter!

As we noted above the trip from Troas to Philippi was expedited by God, and the last part of ACTS 16:12 reads: *...and we were in that city abiding certain days.* The word "abiding" means to spend, or to pass time. Why did God have them rush from Troas to Philippi just to pass time? ISAIAH 55:8 & 9 perhaps best answers this question by noting: *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* One thing we should note is that while waiting here at Philippi for the further leading of the Lord, Paul, Silas,

Timothy, and Luke were also getting acquainted with the city of Philippi, and the manner of the Macedonian people.

Also once again the Apostle Paul, and those traveling with him, were learning valuable lessons on patience. No other author of scripture writes as much about patience as does the Apostle Paul. And he couldn't have written what he did about patience without first experiencing Godly patience himself. Here is some of what Paul wrote on the subject of patience. 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.* Note here how Paul explains that trials and tribulation worketh patience. ROMANS 8:25 *But if we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it.* 2 THESSALONIANS 3:5 *And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.* HEBREWS 12:1 *Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, 2 Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.* We spent a lot of time studying this eighty-word sentence in previous Sunday School lessons. What we learn from these few scriptures is that patience is something that is necessary in the life of a full overcomer. We find this thought further amplified in what Jesus states to the full overcomers found in the church of Philadelphia in REVELATION 3:10 *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.* Of course we know that Jesus was the ultimate full overcomer having waited patiently 30 years here on earth for the time that He was to begin His ministry. We said all of this about patience to note here in ACTS 16:12 that these days of abiding in Philippi were working there eternal purpose in God's plan for the life of the Apostle Paul, and his traveling companions. Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke all had equal opportunity here to become full overcomers, and all full overcomers will possess patience.

It seems kind of strange, doesn't it, what we have studied since ACTS 16:9, the fact that God showed Paul a vision where a Macedonia man urged the Apostle Paul to come over into Macedonia and help us, and yet once they got there nothing seemed to happen. ROMANS 12:12 reads: *Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer.* I know the Apostle Paul and his companions were being patient here, and were instant in prayer. Perhaps the speedy trip by ship was also a rough one, and the Apostle Paul and his companions needed time to recover from sea sickness. We don't know this for a fact for the scripture doesn't tell us. However we do know that Paul was following the leading of the Holy Ghost, and the timing of the Lord is always perfect, and correct. I believed they all took full advantage of their time of patience here at Philippi when they *...were in that city abiding certain days.* Perhaps they were learning a little about the customs, and culture of the Macedonians as they waited for the Lord to open His door of opportunity to them here in Macedonia. The end result was well worth waiting a few days for because in the light of eternity Philippi was a very important place in the life of the Apostle Paul, and his dealings there have reached down through the ages even unto you and me! Rome wasn't built in a day, and neither was any full overcomer built in a day (so to speak)!

ACTS 16:12 *...and we were in that city abiding certain days. 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.* In our life of the Apostle Paul study we found that his manner upon reaching a city was to attend a Sabbath's day service at a synagogue if there was a synagogue in that city. In ACTS 13:14 in Antioch, Pisidia Paul and Barnabas on their first sabbath day there went unto the synagogue, and so it was the pattern everywhere Paul went. There are several scriptures in the book of ACTS that verify this behaviour of Paul's. ACTS 17:1 & 2 notes: *Now when they had*



*passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: 2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,...* . ACTS 18:4 notes: *And he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks.* In ACTS 18:19 we read of this same thing happenings at Ephesus: *And he came to Ephesus, and left them there: but he himself entered into the synagogue, and reasoned with the Jews.* However here in Philippi Paul has come to a region where there is no synagogue.

At this point in time the boundaries of Philippi hold no room for Jesus. Paul and company have to go outside the gate, outside the camp of Philippi in order to find the place where close fellowship with Jesus was to be found. ACTS 16:13 *And on the sabbath we went out of the city...* . In THE SONG OF SOLOMON chapter 3 and verse 4 we read: *It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth:...* meaning the bride found her love outside the city limits, beyond the bounds of popularity, beyond the things of the world, and that is where she found close fellowship with her bridegroom. Abraham's servant sought out a bride for Isaac beyond the land of Canaan in GENESIS 24, and the Holy Ghost today is still searching among believers for those who have an ear for His Voice, and will seek Him even without the camp. HEBREWS 13:12 *Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify {to separate from profane things and dedicate to God} the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate. 13 Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.* My Mother wrote a short commentary on this portion of scripture, which reads: "The important thing here then is not just going without the camp, but why? We are to go forth unto Him bearing His reproach. To walk with Him no matter what. To separate yourself from anything or anyone who would hinder your fellowship and relationship with the Lord. To learn the lessons which Paul has instructed us, and to follow him as he followed Christ. There are things which are not necessarily sinful or wrong which we might do, but would take your time and attention away from the Lord. Things which would hinder your full communion with Him, and would keep you from being a full overcomer. To go without the camp unto Him then is putting Him first in every way, fully surrendered, learning His word, walking in the light of it, and making yourself available to do His will. Following His leading alone, not what someone says, but what the Word says, and more than this, what the Word says to you alone -- you are a unique individual with unique problems, trials and test designed by a loving Father just for you with a set of guide lines designed to help you to be an overcomer and win Christ the prize as bridegroom. Millions of people have been saved, but few have gone without the camp unto Him so they could be prepared for that special place." {End of quote from Phyllis Robinson.}

ACTS 16:13 *And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side...* . Once outside the city Paul and company came by a riverside. The riverside speaks of a place where water is flowing. In JOHN 4 Jesus gives the Samaritan woman a discourse on the well of living water. In JOHN 7:38 we read: *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* In EXODUS 17:6 Moses was ordered of the Lord to smite the rock in Horeb with his rod, which Moses did, and water came out of the rock and the children of Israel had water to drink. The Apostle Paul makes reference to this event in 1 CORINTHIANS 10:4 when he writes: *And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.* Spiritually speaking the rivers of living waters represents the Word of God, who is Jesus, upon whom all believers feed and drink in freely His abundant and refreshing Words of life, or as Paul states it in ACTS 20:32 *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

So we find on the first sabbath day that Paul and his company were in Philippi they ...*went out of the city by a river side,...* ACTS 16:13. One of my very favorite portions of scripture is JEREMIAH 17:5-8, which the Holy Ghost first opened up to me when I was in college. In JEREMIAH 17:5 & 6 we find the condition of a man who puts his trust in man. In JEREMIAH 17:7 & 8 we find the condition of a man who puts his trust in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. In JEREMIAH 17:8 we really see what's in the heart of the overcomer, and the results of having hope

and faith in the Lord. We will spend a little time studying some of the high lights of JEREMIAH 17:8 noting what can be found by the river side.

JEREMIAH 17:8 *For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.* Note here in JEREMIAH 17:8 that this tree is planted by the riverside. And this is a fruit yielding tree; a her tree with “her roots,” and her leaves; a tree that represents qualities that will be found in the Bride of Christ, and a tree worthy of your study time. A tree, or trees in scripture, figuratively, represent men; green trees represent the righteous; dry trees, like the heath in JEREMIAH 17:6 figure the wicked man who puts his trust in man. There are many portions of scripture that illustrate this point. Here are a couple of them. PSALMS 1:1 *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. 2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night. 3 And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.* ISAIAH 61:1 *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, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn; 3 To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.*

The tree in JEREMIAH 17:8 is planted. To plant something requires some fore thought. According to EPHESIANS 1:4 & 5 *...he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,...* . Oh what fore thought to choose us in Him before the foundation of the world! Truly we believers are *...called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified...* as we just read in ISAIAH 61:3. Note what is said in ROMANS 8. ROMANS 8:27 *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. 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.*

After the tree is planted we find that JEREMIAH 17:8 takes us deeper into the phases of growth of the spiritual man, whose heart is after God’s own heart, like David’s was, and like all full overcomers hearts are. JEREMIAH 17:8 *For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters,...* . Water in scripture pictures the word of God. In REVELATION 19:13 we read that Jesus *...is called The Word of God.* JOHN 7:38, which we read above again states: *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* REVELATION 22:17 lays out the simple plan of salvation , and states: *...And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.* In JOHN chapter 4 we find Jesus giving the woman of Samaria the discourse on the water of life, and in so doing He gave her the gift of living water, which is salvation. JOHN 4:14 tells us: *But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.* Also in JEREMIAH 17:13 we see that the Lord is *...the fountain of living waters.*

Next in JEREMIAH 17:8 we see “her roots.” JEREMIAH 17:8 *For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters, and that spreadeth out her roots by the river,...* . What kind of tree is a her tree, a tree with “her roots?” Obviously the Lord is looking at more than just a tree here; He is looking at “*the joy that was set before Him,*” while on the cross (HEBREWS 12:2); He is looking at

that group of full overcomers, who in this church age will end up being the Bride of Christ! He is looking at “her roots;” her heart in other words. Look at 2 CORINTHIANS 4:7 and note how the Apostle Paul expressed this very same thought when he writes: *But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.* What is “this treasure in earthen vessels”? Is it not **Christ who liveth in me**? GALATIANS 2:20 tells us: *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* “Her roots” feed upon Christ so that she “*may grow up into Him in all things*” according to EPHESIANS 4:15. Thus we find the tree in JEREMIAH 17:8 representative of **Christ who liveth in me**, as Scott also pointed out in his recent Sunday night class. Think about this for a moment. Christ will have a wife who has grown up into Him in all things. She is grown up into Him a fully mature Woman who according to REVELATION 19:7 has made herself ready to be the Bride of Christ, and she achieves this rank by following the leading, and guiding of the Holy Ghost. Again “her roots” feed upon Christ so that she “*may grow up into Him in all things*” according to EPHESIANS 4:15. When Gabriel announced in LUKE 1:28 that Mary was “**highly favoured**” the meaning that was being conveyed was that Mary was the “(one) receiving grace” as the original Greek renders it. And Christ grew up in her until the day Jesus was made fully manifest to the world in the manger in Bethlehem. Precious born again Saint do you realize that the very same incorruptible seed of Christ was implanted in your heart the very moment you accepted Jesus as your Saviour? This is exactly what is noted in JAMES 1:21 that we are to *...receive with meekness the engrafted (implanted) word.* Again Paul stated this same thought in GALATIANS 2:20, which we just read: *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* All who are born again have Christ living in them. The question remains, is Christ growing up in them? Is Christ growing up in you? I think we all love the story of Jesus’ birth, and wish we too could be “**highly favoured**” like Mary. For those of you who may not know this already, all that are born again are indeed “**highly favoured**” like Mary. The Greek word charitoo {khar-ee-to'-o}, number 5487 in The Strong’s Greek Concordance, which is translated “**highly favoured**” in LUKE 1:28, is also found one more time in scripture, and that scripture is EPHESIANS 1:6 where charitoo {khar-ee-to'-o} is translated made accepted. EPHESIANS 1:6 *To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.* Thank the Lord that we too are “**highly favoured**” like Mary, but think about this in the coming hours, and coming days if Jesus should tarry; how “**highly favoured**” is the Bride of Christ? Thus we note once more that “her roots” referenced in JEREMIAH 17:8 are feeding upon Christ, His Word, so that she “*may grow up into Him in all things*” according to EPHESIANS 4:15, and be found “joint-heirs with Christ” as is noted in ROMANS 8:17. Christ’s wife will be a full grown spiritual woman, who *...spreadeth out her roots by the river,...* who grew in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ by feeding upon His Word, and will be found having grown up into Him in all things! John the revelator couldn’t tell the difference between a bridal Saint, and Jesus in REVELATION 19:10 and 22:9 because the Bride of Christ is found to be like Him! It was John the revelator who also wrote this in 1 JOHN 3:2 *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.*

This tree of JEREMIAH 17:8 has been thought about, fore ordained, planted in good exceedingly rich soil, planted by the endless supply of living waters, and she, this her tree, spreadeth out “her roots.” “Her roots” are hidden, for none of us can see the roots of a tree, or know how far out they have reached, or see what it is they are feeding upon. Considering the overcomers heart, which we also can not see as we look upon one another, but truly the Lord knows what is in our hearts, for again 1 SAMUEL 16:7 tells us: *...for the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart.* In other words only He can see how deep “her roots” go. How deep are your roots? PSALMS 119:11 in part reads: *Thy word have I hid in mine heart,...* The Word of God, the living water, is what the full overcomer feeds upon, taking

in the water of life freely, ever searching and reaching unto deeper depths of the exceeding riches of God's grace that he has shown us in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus as is noted in EPHESIANS 2:7.

In JOHN 5:39 Jesus says: *Search the scriptures;... they are they which testify of me.* To Timothy Paul wrote in 1 TIMOTHY 4:13 *Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.* Again later in 2 TIMOTHY 2:15 the Apostle Paul once again encouraged Timothy to spread out his roots into deeper soil by stating: *Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.* A few verses later the Apostle Paul encourages Timothy some more, and states in 2 TIMOTHY 3:16 *All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*

In ACTS 17:11 we find the Apostle Paul briefly visiting Berea. We are told in this verse that: *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.* In other words, these saints of Berea were quickly spreading out deep roots. They were quickly becoming established in the truth of the Word of God. Paul was only with them a short time, but he instilled in them the importance of searching the scriptures daily, and daily looking for the soon coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

If you take time to research the word "spreadeth" here in JEREMIAH 17:8, you will find that it's Hebrew usage is unique here in scripture, used only this one time in the Bible with this meaning: to send away, to send forth, to send out. The Apostle Paul expressed a similar thought in PHILIPPIANS 3. PHILIPPIANS 3:13 *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* The Bride of Christ "spreadeth out her roots," reaches forth unto those things which are before, and presses toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Rebekah in GENESIS 24 "spreadeth out her roots" when she said in verse 58 "I will go," for in her heart she had already purposed to marry Isaac.

We have noticed here in JEREMIAH 17:8 the roots of a growing tree, and this tree is daily feeding upon the endless supply of living water, from the river of water that is always available to her. In the process this her tree is "spreading out her roots." In other words this tree, this her tree is found, "...reaching forth unto those things which are before,..." and digging deeper and deeper into the exceeding rich soil into which she was planted, ...the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified. (ISAIAH 61:3). This tree of JEREMIAH 17:8 pictures all those race course runners who become full overcomers because they took root, deep roots, ever spreading out their roots in an ever forward progression of deeper and deeper growth in Christ Jesus, feeding daily upon the Word of God, the river of living water, thus growing in grace and knowledge of their first love, the Lord Jesus Christ. 2 PETER 3:18 *But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.* Are you interested in learning the deeper things of God? If so spread out your roots! Try to exhaust that endless supply of living water.

The river here speaks of the Holy Ghost, which all full overcomers must freely receive in order to properly spread out their roots. Jesus explains it like this in JOHN 7:38 *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. 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.)* This river never runs dry.

Now note the next part of JEREMIAH 17:8 *...and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.* We find "heat" and "drought" mentioned in this portion. This speaks of the times of testings and trials. All full overcomers must have these times of testing and trials in their own life, things to overcome in other words, but if you will notice this well established tree with deep roots is not anxious during such times, but rather shoots down deeper roots! The full overcomer sees the good

through such tests. The worldly man who trusted in man in JEREMIAH 17:6 could “not see when good cometh,” because his focus was not upon the Lord. The full overcomer with deep roots, recognized ROMANS 8:28 in such times when the heat cometh: ROMANS 8:28 *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.* Probably one of the most concise commentaries on this thought of how the full overcomer is to deal with tests and trials is found in PHILIPPIANS 4. PHILIPPIANS 4:6 *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.* A full overcomer will see Jesus in everything that comes their way, thus they ... *shall not see when heat cometh,... ...and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.*

Consider next this tree’s green leaf. Green speaks of resurrection. Jesus said in JOHN 11:25 *...I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.* Green thus points us to the new life that we have in Christ Jesus. We may not be able to see what the roots of this tree has taken in, but we can observe her green leaf. Her leaf is green because it has taken in light. Jesus said in JOHN 8:12 *...I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.* Again in JOHN 9:5 Jesus states: *As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.* If the leaf doesn’t see light, then it isn’t going to be green very long. Cover the green leaf, and it doesn’t take long before it turns yellow, and looks anemic. The full overcomer takes in as much available light as they can; the anemic Christian does not. The full overcomer has an upward gaze, and like this tree of JEREMIAH 17:8 her branches reach out and up, and her leaves takes in all the light they can, and reach out for more.

We learned in school that the leaf breathes, and as it does so it purifies the atmosphere around it, thus giving those close by a breath of fresh air in this ever increasing polluted world. The overcomer too is a breath of fresh air to those nearby repeating words of faith and of good doctrine, which they have learned. {Study 1 TIMOTHY 4:6.}

One more thing about the leaves of a tree. They provide shade and comfort on an otherwise very hot day. The Apostle Paul expresses this very same thought in 2 CORINTHIANS 1:3 *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; 4 Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God.* In this portion we see that full overcomers are “givers” also, giving of their time, and substance; giving out what they themselves have taken in from the Lord in their time of heat.

One final thought concerning this “her tree” that in so many ways pictures qualities found in the full overcomer: it brings forth fruit. Not only does it bring forth fruit, but our text states: *...neither shall cease from yielding fruit.* These are akin to those found in the parable of the sower found in LUKE 8:15, which reads: *But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience.* In MARK 4:20 we find in this same parable that these of LUKE 8:15 were a hundred fold fruitful! What a farmer would give for a tree that was a hundred fold fruitful, and never cease from yielding fruit. The number 100 we learned in our meaning of the numbers study has to do with completion. Don’t you want to be one of the ones spoken of in REVELATION 19:7, who is a hundred percent complete, His wife who hath made herself ready?

JEREMIAH 17:8 gives one more important clue on how this is possible, how *...His wife hath made herself ready...* when it states: *...neither shall cease from yielding...* Interestingly the word “yielding” is found seven times in scripture, and JEREMIAH 17:8 is the seventh scripture where this word “yielding” is found. Seven is the number that points to SPIRITUAL PERFECTION, or SPIRITUAL COMPLETION, thus we note that “yielding” is a quality that will be found in that

spiritual perfect, and complete mystical Woman, whom we know to be the Bride of Christ. One of the meanings of “yielding” found in Webster’s Dictionary is “submissive; obedient.” The Apostle Paul wrote the following: *EPHESIANS 5:22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. COLOSSIANS 3:18 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.* In these two scriptures Paul is giving instructions to Godly wives, but the spiritual application is for us to submit ourselves unto the will of God being a hundred percent “yielding” vessel unto the Lord. The Apostle Peter also explained this concept in 1 PETER 4:1 & 2, which reads: *Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; 2 That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.*

Another definition of “yielding” found in Webster’s Dictionary is: “bending easily; flexible.” Thus we find “yielding” shows a willingness to change. We sometimes sing the chorus “have thine own way Lord, have thine own way. Thou art the potter, I am the clay... .” This chorus speaks of “yielding.” So does the chorus “Let the Lord have His way, in your heart every day, there’s no peace, there’s no rest till the Lord has His way. Put your hand in His hand, walk securely in His plan; let the Lord, oh let the Lord have His way.” The encouragement found in this simple chorus is not popular with the world, especially the world in which we live, but to the race-course runner the words of this chorus define the way to God’s best.

Another thing about “yielding.” When we pray to the Lord and tell him we want to be a full overcomer, what we are really asking for is the Lord to change us. Put another way, there has never been a full overcomer yet whom the Lord didn’t have to bring major changes into their life. These changes ultimately take place in one’s heart, but also require changes in our attitudes. Look at it this way: when we pray to the Lord that we want to have God’s best, that we too want to be in the Bride of Christ, that we want to be full overcomers, what we are really saying is: “Lord I want you to bring the changes in my life that will make me a full overcomer.” Yet our human nature often is to resist such changes, and when God starts to bring those changes about in our life, we balk, squawk, scream and holler just like the young eagle on its first flying lesson. This is where many race-course runners give up the race and go back to their so called familiar, and perhaps comfortable situation, hoping for no more change. Thus in return they settle for something less than God’s best. However there are those true race course runners, potential full overcomers, who have grown somewhat in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, and they recognize some important things about running this race. These potential full overcomers have learned that running this race is all about winning Christ as Bridegroom, which in itself is sufficient encouragement to continue running. These potential full overcomers have truly learned, and know “...that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose,” ...ROMANS 8:28. These potential full overcomers also know “that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ” ...1 PETER 1:7. In fact, these potential full overcomers have learned that these events on their race course, these obstacles, if you will, are carefully planned and placed there by an eternal, careful, ever-loving Heavenly Father, who from the eternity’s past has only had their, and our best interest in mind. HEBREWS 12:2 even tells us that *...Jesus (is) the author and finisher of our faith;... .* The full overcomer yields himself unto God, as ROMANS 6:13 instructs. *Jesus ...being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross...* PHILIPPIANS 2:8 tells us. This is “yielding.” Each full overcomer that will rule and reign with Jesus as His Bride, will be from that rib portion company of believers from this church age who, like Jesus, yielded unto God’s will, not their own will, and were submissive unto God’s plan not their own plan. Those truly found with “her roots” *...neither shall cease from yielding...*

The depths of what is brought forth in JEREMIAH 17:5–8 really address what is found in the heart of man. JEREMIAH 17:9 & 10 goes on to explain: *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? 10 I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give*



every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. Jesus Himself quotes JEREMIAH 17:10 in His address to the church at Thyatira in REVELATION 2:23 where He says: *And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.* The Apostle Paul also makes reference to JEREMIAH 17:10 in his statement of ROMANS 8:27, which reads: *And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, (the Holy Spirit) because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God.* Thus we find the “her roots” of JEREMIAH 17:8 really speak to what is in the heart of a full overcomer!

By studying what we just noted in JEREMIAH 17:8 gives us a glimpse of the treasure that Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke found on that Sabbath day in ACTS 16:13. ACTS 16:13 *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.* This was one of the places where the church of Philippi was founded, by a riverside. The word “wont” here references a “proseucha,” which was a place of prayer, or a place used for worship where there was no synagogue. It was probably an amphitheater type affair, with seats, like in an uncovered building, where there seemed to be a gathering place of prayer, and worship on a Sabbath day at Philippi. Prayer is such an important part in the lives of all full overcomers. This is why the Holy Ghost is so important in the life of a believer, for ROMANS 8:26 tells us: *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.* Furthermore the Apostle Paul encourages us to *...Pray without ceasing...* in 1 THESSALONIANS 5:17. ROMANS 12:12 tells us in part: *...continuing instant in prayer.* PHILIPPIANS 4:6 reads: *Be careful (anxious) for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.* COLOSSIANS 4:2 *Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;...* . JAMES 5:16-18 reads: *The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. 17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. 18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.* And 1 PETER 3:12 in part tells us: *For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers:...* .

Luke next writes in ACTS 16:13 *...and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.* The phrase “sat down” is found forty times in scripture. Forty is the number of PERFECT TESTING. Sitting down often times requires testing patience. In ACTS 13:14 Paul and Barnabas went unto the synagogue in Antioch, Pisidia for the first time and “sat down.” There they waited for the Holy Ghost to open unto them the door of opportunity to once again stand up, and speak the words of truth for Jesus. All Bridal Saints must first learn to “sit down.” Ruth could not become the bride of Boaz (a type of Christ) before until she learned to “sit still.” {see RUTH 3:18}. Rebekah couldn’t become bride to Isaac until she learned how to sit down and patiently ride the camel. In the SONG OF SOLOMON 2:3 we read: *...I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.*

ACTS 16:13 *...and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.* “Resorted thither” means that there was an assembly of women who came to the river side on the Sabbath for the purpose of worship in the form of a prayer meeting: *...by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made.* Note it was the women who at the first had a heart for the Lord at Philippi. God made women to think with their heart, and men to think with their head, so it is not a strange thing to first find that it was the women who had a heart for the Lord at Philippi. All full overcomers will have a heart in tune with their Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. All full overcomers will be well versed in prayer and worship also, just like these women of Philippi.

In ACTS 16:14 & 15 Luke expounds on the statement he just made in ACTS 16:13: *...and spake unto the women which resorted thither.* ACTS 16:14 *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. 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.*

This is such a wonderful portion of scripture, just loaded with good stuff if we can only see it with our dove's eyes. The focus of these two verses is Lydia, a woman who shows qualities that all full overcomers must have. In Lydia we also see qualities also found in the virtuous woman of PROVERBS 31. First of all note that she already was a believer, for she *...worshipped God...*. She was one of the regulars at Philippi who *...resorted thither...*, that is came down to the river on the Sabbath for the purpose to worship God.

Secondly, Lydia is noted to have open ears to hear the truth, for Luke informs the reader that she *...heard us...*.

Thirdly, we find that the Lord opened her heart to receive the truth she was hearing. Ponder these words of ACTS 16:14 *...whose heart the Lord opened...*. The whole discussion above from JEREMIAH 17:7 & 8 was directed at those *...whose heart the Lord opened...*. The race course runners, who go on to have God's best, will do so because they are among those *...whose heart the Lord opened...*. Be thankful if you too are one *...whose heart the Lord opened...*. Remember the two Emmaus disciples that Jesus appeared to on the day of His resurrection in LUKE 24? They had quite a lengthy, and most wonderful discussion with Jesus that day. At evening during a meal Jesus then revealed Himself unto them, and vanished out of their sight. LUKE 24:32 records their words: *And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?* Jesus had opened unto them the scriptures expounding the things in scripture concerning Himself. Lydia here in ACTS 16:14 had the same kind of heart, *...whose heart the Lord opened...*. Since the event of LUKE 24:32 the Lord Jesus Christ Himself has sent us the Holy Ghost, who job it is to guide us into all truth, and show us the important things of the Lord, this according to JOHN 16:12-15. Additionally when Jesus appeared unto Saul of Tarsus, our Apostle Paul, on the road to Damascus, Jesus told him that He would make him a minister, and a witness of the things the Lord Himself would reveal unto him, and send him forth as an Apostle unto the Gentiles *...To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me...* ACTS 26:18. This all happened as the Lord said it would, and the Apostle Paul remains the Apostle of the Gentiles as is recorded in ROMANS 11:13. When Paul and company went down to the riverside in ACTS 16:13 & 14, and found Lydia, there hadn't yet been written one word of Paul's epistles, so the only way she was going to learn Paul's gospel message was by hearing Paul expound his gospel message by word of mouth, which she did, and *...whose heart the Lord opened...* to receive this gospel message. We today have one hundred chapters of Paul's gospel message written down, recorded in our scripture, the Word of God left for us to study and know. So the question we each must answer for ourselves is has the Lord opened my heart to receive Paul's gospel message like Lydia did?

Forth, and just as important, it is specifically noted *...that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.* Any full overcomer from this church age will only be a full overcomer because they attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. Two portions of scripture from ROMANS that were written by Paul emphasize this very point. ROMANS 2:16 tells us: *In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.* We see here that Paul's gospel is the message that *...God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ...* by. Secondly we read this in ROMANS 16:25 *Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, 26 But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: 27 To God only wise, be glory through Jesus Christ for ever. Amen.* One of the encouragements here is to be established in Paul's gospel. We read in HEBREWS 13:9 this statement: *"...For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace..."* The grace of God is

fully expounded in Paul's gospel. The word "attended" here in ACTS 16:14 means to be attentive, or pay close attention to. The thought here is that Lydia was apprehending, and drinking in every word spoken by the Apostle Paul, having her whole mind engrossed with what he was saying, and teaching. We find then that Lydia was showing herself to be a woman of faith, for ROMANS 10:17 informs us: *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

Fifth we find in verse 15 that Lydia, and her household received, and believed Paul's doctrine on water baptism. After the resurrection of Jesus water baptism to a Jew was an outward expression of an inward belief that they had accepted Jesus as their own personal Saviour, His forgiveness of their sins, and that they had died unto the law of Moses and were to be counted among those who believed in the resurrected Jesus Christ. Brother Copley noted that a fellow Jew will not believe that a Jew is saved if they are not willing to be baptized in water, thus when a Jew is baptized in water the unbelieving Jews denounce the baptized Jew from Judaism, and even from their family. They are referred to by other Jews as "the blotted out," having denounced Judaism and accepted the message of the Saviour. Recall also in 1 CORINTHIANS 1:22 that Paul writes: *For the Jews require a sign,...* Water baptism was a definite sign unto the Jews that one had accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour. We are not told if Lydia was a Jew or not, but if not, why did she come down by the river to worship on the Sabbath? Thus we find in ACTS 16:14 & 15 that Lydia had open ears to hear, and receive with her open heart, the things of Paul's doctrine that were spoken by Paul, qualities that all full overcomers must have.

We have just mentioned five qualities found Lydia; qualities that all grace Saints possess. (1) she worshipped God; (2) she listened to the Word of God; (3) her heart was opened to receive the Word of God; (4) she paid close attention to the things said by Paul; and (5) she believed Paul's gospel message, and acted upon it.

ACTS 16:14 also records that Lydia was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira. In the city of Thyatira it is recorded in history that there was a corporate guild of dyers during the time of the Roman Empire. One historical account records that the waters of Thyatira were so suited for dying that nowhere was the scarlet of fezzes (purple) thought to be so brilliant, and permanent as that made in Thyatira. Lydia made a good living selling the purple of Thyatira. One of the qualities of a full overcomer that is pictured by Lydia concerns her being a seller of purple, so let's see how this is. Purple in scripture pictures royalty. We find the word purple 48 times in scripture. The Bride of Christ will be a part of the royalty in heaven, part of the aristocracy of heaven that Brother Hill so often liked to talk about. The Apostle John notes this of Jesus in REVELATION 1. REVELATION 1:5 *...Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, 6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.* This then is your aristocracy of heaven; heaven's royalty.

ACTS 16:15 *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.* The word "besought" here is the same Greek word translated "prayed" in ACTS 16:9 *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.* "Besought" here means to urge, or to earnestly appeal. In other words Lydia was not going to take no for an answer, and she earnestly entreated saying, *...If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.* The Greek word translated "constrained" is only found twice in New Testament scripture, and it simply means insisted. LUKE 24:29 is the other place we find this word "constrained," and in this scripture we find the two men traveling on the road to Emmaus listening to the risen Saviour speak the scriptures unto them. As evening was coming on they "constrained" Jesus to tarry with them for the night. As they begin to eat dinner, Jesus revealed Himself unto them, and then vanished out of their sight. This is when they said one to the other as we noted above: *Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?...LUKE 24:32.* Lydia's heart felt the same way after hearing the words of the Apostle Paul, for his gospel had

pricked her heart, causing her heart to also compassionately burn within her for more of the gospel of Jesus to be spoken of, and for more of the scriptures to be opened unto her. Since she couldn't seem to get enough of this good gospel message, and not willing to let the day end with a simple good bye, ...*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.*

This is called hospitality. This kind of behavior also spoke volumes to the heart of the Apostle Paul. In ROMANS 12 the Apostle Paul wrote the following, and especially note the 13th verse. ROMANS 12:9 *Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. 10 Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another; 11 Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; 12 Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; 13 Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality.* Years later the Apostle Paul would write to Timothy about the office of a bishop, and he noted the qualifications of a bishop. Lydia displayed many of these same qualifications, and here in ACTS 16 Timothy enjoyed her hospitality also, so he knew what Paul was saying when he wrote: 1 TIMOTHY 3:1 *This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; 4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)* Later in the same letter Paul wrote unto Timothy about older widows, stating: 1 TIMOTHY 5:9 *Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, 10 Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work.* Again Timothy would know what the Apostle Paul was talking about, having himself been one of the strangers lodged by Lydia. In HEBREWS 13:2 Paul writes: *Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.* Later in HEBREWS 13 Paul also writes: 20 *Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, 21 Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.* The hospitality shown by Lydia in ACTS 16:15 was one of the good works Paul referenced in the scriptures above.

We all can learn many things from Lydia, and one of the more important things she said was this phrase found in verse 15: ...*come into my house, and abide there.* Is the gospel of the Apostle Paul allowed in your house, and allowed to abide there? If so it is because Paul's gospel has shined in your hearts, and taken root there like the tree we discussed in JEREMIAH 17:8. Paul wrote in 2 CORINTHIANS 4:6 *For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. 7 But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.* This treasure we have in our earthen vessel is Christ that liveth in me, which thought we also discussed above when looking at JEREMIAH 17:8. Again GALATIANS 2:20 tells us: *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* When Lydia said in ACTS 16:15 ...*come into my house, and abide there...* she was really requesting to learn more of the Word of God, the word of His grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified, as Paul's gospel also teaches; that the doctrines of Paul would reign in her heart. Lydia wanted the doctrines of Paul to become a part of her household. Have the doctrines of Paul become a part of your household? Paul's gospel is found in the homes of all New Testament full overcomers!

We will find in ACTS 16:40 that the house of Lydia remained the home base of the Apostle Paul, and his group while at Philippi. ACTS 16:40 is the last time we read of Lydia in scripture, however she was very important behind the scenes there at Philippi. We have noted many fine

qualities of a full overcomer displayed by Lydia. When the Apostle Paul writes his epistle unto the PHILIPPIANS he has Lydia and her household in mind. PHILIPPIANS 1:1 *Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: 2 Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, 5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now;* (the first day included the day Lydia and her household first heard the gospel of Paul preached down by the riverside.) *6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: 7 Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.* So what we have found in ACTS 16:13-15 is the initial establishment of the church at Philippi. This was just the beginning here at Philippi.

Late in life Paul would write in HEBREWS 13:5 *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. 7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.* Hopefully this is a familiar portion of scripture for you, but right now let's focus upon the word "conversation" found in both verses 5 and 7 above. There are two different Greek words translated "conversation" here. Both reference a manner of life, or a way of life without covetousness, and a manner of conduct of a life lived by faith. Such was the manner of the life of Paul, whose faith we are to follow.

Twice in PHILIPPIANS we also find the word "conversation." The first time is in PHILIPPIANS 1:27. PHILIPPIANS 1:27 *Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; 28 And in nothing terrified by your adversaries: which is to them an evident token of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that of God. 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; 30 Having the same conflict which ye saw in me, and now hear to be in me.* A third different Greek word is translated "conversation: in verse 27, which means: to live, and conduct oneself as a citizen of heaven. Note in verses 28-30 Paul references the kind of tests, and trials that a man of faith will face as he lives his manner of life as a citizen of heaven, *...For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake...* PHILIPPIANS 1:29. Followers of Paul know this to be true. Brother Hill asked this question in his PHILIPPIANS study book: "Do you realize there are levels of privilege in the Christian Life? ...You're born again. You're heirs of God. You are the aristocracy of heaven, and being that gives you privilege that a lot of people don't have. Knowing what you know has opened up privileges to you. ...Do you know what they are?" {End of quoting Brother Hill for a moment.} PHILIPPIANS 1:29 is one of the privileges Brother Hill was talking about: *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.* Recently two Brothers from this assembly went home to be with the Lord, Brother Vern Wilson, and Brother John Hill. Both of them with out a shadow of a doubt counted it a privilege *...not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake.* Let me now finish quoting Brother Hill. "But in Christ the privileged children of God are those who suffer with Him, who bear the marks of the Lord Jesus Christ, who fill up that which is lacking in the afflictions of Christ. For as we suffer with Him, we'll reign with Him. (2 TIMOTHY 2:12)." {End of quoting Brother Hill.}

Now in PHILIPPIANS 3:20 we read the word "conversation" again: *For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.* A different fourth Greek word is translated "conversation" here, and it simply means: our citizenship. In short our citizenship is in heaven. Let me quote again Brother Hill as he explained this thought. "Do you know who you are? Are you sure you know who you are? Do you know you "have passed from death unto life?" (1 JOHN 3:14) Do you know "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with

Him in glory?" (COLOSSIANS 3:14) Do you know you have been "translated out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his dear Son?" (COLOSSIANS 1:13) Do you know "Now are we the sons of God?" (1 JOHN 3:2) Do you know these things?" {End of quoting Brother Hill.}

We mentioned these four references in Paul's scripture about his "conversation;" his manner of life, his citizenship in heaven, to introduce the thought that we are to follow Paul as he followed Christ. 1 CORINTHIANS 4:16 *Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.* 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1 *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.* PHILIPPIANS 3:17 *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.* 2 CORINTHIANS 11:2 tells us why we are to follow Paul as he followed Christ: *For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.*

What do all of these scriptures that we just referenced, and looked at have to do with our **midnight** Bible story of ACTS 16? Paul and company in ACTS 16 have just found Lydia and her household worshipping God down by the riverside there at Philippi. By the time of ACTS 16:16 Paul has been introducing Lydia and her household, and the other women who had resorted thither to Paul's gospel message. As far as we have been told here in ACTS 16, so far while at Philippi Paul and company haven't faced any opposition. That's about to change, for in order to be a full overcomer there are things ordained of God that must be placed on our race course for us to overcome, like obstacles, which are put before us to overcome in order for us to become the full overcomer God wants us to become. Paul's life is our example of that very fact, so as we follow Paul as he followed Christ expect obstacles; expect trials; expect tests; expect opposition. We can not overcome any of these ordained obstacles in our own power ...*For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)* ...2 CORINTHIANS 10:3 & 4. The Apostle Paul wrote this. The Holy Ghost also inspired the Apostle Paul to write of the warfare of the believer in EPHESIANS 6:10-18. EPHESIANS 6:10 *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. 11 Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. 13 Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. 14 Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; 15 And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; 16 Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. 17 And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God: 18 Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;...* . Often times these obstacles to overcome on our race course are presented to us from the enemy himself, ...*that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world...* REVELATION 12:9. We know from GENESIS 3:1 that ...*the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made.* We found in our meaning of the Bible numbers study that there were eighteen names mentioned in scripture referencing Satan, and that these eighteen names came in groups of six: 6+6+6, or six, six, six in other words. Some of these names of Satan are tempter, destroyer, devourer, serpent, wicked one, adversary, the Devil, and enemy. The Apostle Paul acknowledges in 2 CORINTHIANS 2:11 that the full overcomer must learn to recognize these obstacles placed on our race course: *Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices.* Jesus Himself had told the future Apostle Paul on the road to Damascus about the darkness of Satan, and the power of Satan. We note this again in that familiar portion of scripture, ACTS 26:16-18, which reads: *But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.*



Implied in this statement is the fact that there are things ordained of God that must be placed on the Apostle Paul's race course, like obstacles, which are to be put before him in order for him to become the full overcomer God wants him to become, and that Jesus Himself will be the One, the only One, who can deliver him from these often perilous obstacles. So again we repeat what we read above in 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.* Thus we expect to find some dark testing times as we continue with this **midnight** Bible story found in ACTS 16; a **midnight** Bible story left in scripture for our eternal benefit!

The fact that there will be opposition from Satan at every turn along life's pathway is an underlying theme throughout all scripture, and this ever present opposition faces both sinner and Saint. The fact that there is a Deliverer from such opposition is also a bigger underlying theme throughout all scripture. The Apostle Paul in ACTS 13:22 acknowledged in his sermon at Antioch in Pisidia that David was a man after God's own heart. Five times in David's statements, or writings we find David acknowledging that the LORD was his **deliverer**. We should also recognize that all GRACE Saints should also acknowledge that the LORD is their **deliverer**. Let's take a quick look at these five scriptures. 2 SAMUEL 22:1 *And David spake unto the LORD the words of this song in the day that the LORD had delivered him out of the hand of all his enemies, and out of the hand of Saul:* 2 *And he said, The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my **deliverer**;* 3 *The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence.* PSALMS 18:2 *The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my **deliverer**; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.* PSALMS 40:17 *But I am poor and needy; yet the Lord thinketh upon me: thou art my help and my **deliverer**; make no tarrying, O my God.* PSALMS 70:5 *But I am poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my **deliverer**; O LORD, make no tarrying.* PSALMS 144:2 *My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my **deliverer**; my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me.* Note this also as you study these verses on your own, and that is the fact that these verses were written over the course of David's life, meaning that no matter the test or trial, whether he was young, or old it was still was the LORD who was his **deliverer**. Again we are reminded of what Paul wrote in HEBREWS 13:8 *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.* Obviously David knew this too, but so will all full overcomers. David also wrote: PSALMS 34:19 *Many are the afflictions of the righteous: but the LORD delivereth him out of them all.* Paul wrote: GALATIANS 1:3 *Grace be to you and peace from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ,* 4 *Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:* 5 *To whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.* Paul also penned in 2 CORINTHIANS 1:9 *But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead:* 10 *Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that he will yet deliver us;...* . This then is the heart attitude of a full overcomer, that is to trust in God for indeed He is our **deliverer**. In his final parting words to Timothy, Paul wrote in 2 TIMOTHY 4:18 *And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.* So we see that the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is our **Deliverer**. Thus Paul was able to write in ROMANS 8:37 *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.* The Apostle John addressing this same theme also wrote in 1 JOHN 4:4 *...greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.* Always keep these thoughts foremost in your mind as you run your God given obstacle filled racecourse.

Now having introduced the fact the all racecourse runners will face many obstacles, and seemingly endless opposition in their daily walk with the Lord, let's note what Paul, and company encountered next. ACTS 16:16 *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.*

We probably wouldn't suspect anything amiss here the first time this happened, for what the damsel spoke certainly was true ...*These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.* If we were there we wouldn't know that this young slave girl was ...*possessed with a spirit of divination.* Jesus too had similar experiences when He was on earth; that is there were those possessed with unclean spirits who spoke true statements concerning Jesus. The following are three scriptural examples of true statements spoken by those possessed with unclean spirits.

MARK 1:23 *And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, 24 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God. 25 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. 26 And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him. 27 And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him. 28 And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.*

MARK 3:7 *But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judaea, 8 And from Jerusalem, and from Idumaea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him. 9 And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him. 10 For he had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues. 11 And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. 12 And he straitly charged them that they should not make him known.*

LUKE 4:31 *And came down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee, and taught them on the sabbath days. 32 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power. 33 And in the synagogue there was a man, which had a spirit of an unclean devil, and cried out with a loud voice, 34 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God. 35 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him. And when the devil had thrown him in the midst, he came out of him, and hurt him not. 36 And they were all amazed, and spake among themselves, saying, What a word is this! for with authority and power he commandeth the unclean spirits, and they come out. 37 And the fame of him went out into every place of the country round about. ...40 Now when the sun was setting, all they that had any sick with divers diseases brought them unto him; and he laid his hands on every one of them, and healed them. 41 And devils also came out of many, crying out, and saying, Thou art Christ the Son of God. And he rebuking them suffered them not to speak: for they knew that he was Christ.*

We having been discussing obstacles, and opposition in this part of our **midnight** Bible story of ACTS 16, and have just pointed out how Jesus too had similar experiences when He was on earth, confronting those possessed with unclean spirits who spoke true statements concerning Jesus. We will get back to the opposition Paul faced here at Philippi shortly, but before we examine this event further recall back in ACTS 13 at the very beginning of Paul's first missionary journey, Paul faced a sorcerer named Bar-jesus! Bar-Jesus name indicates that he was the son of a man named Jesus. This man Bar-Jesus may have been the son of a man named Jesus, but he certainly wasn't the son of Jesus Christ. His name does explain his devilish mission: to bar Jesus, meaning to oppose, prevent, forbid, obstruct, exclude, to keep out the gospel message of Jesus. Let's read the account from ACTS 13.

ACTS 13:4 *So they, (Paul and Barnabas) being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus. 5 And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister. 6 And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain sorcerer, a false prophet, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: 7 Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. 8 But Elymas the*

sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to turn away the deputy from the faith. 9 Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, 10 And said, O full of all subtilty and all mischief, thou child of the devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord? 11 And now, behold, the hand of the Lord is upon thee, and thou shalt be blind, not seeing the sun for a season. And immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness; and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand. 12 Then the deputy, when he saw what was done, believed, being astonished at the doctrine of the Lord.

Note here that Bar-Jesus had another name; ...*Elymas the sorcerer* (for so is his name by interpretation). Elymas' name means wise: learned: a magician; and from interpretation it is thought that he may have even been called a doctor. In the least he was respected and a learned man, and his mission was to withstand Paul, and to turn away the governor from hearing the word of God. Elymas was about the devil's business, which was far more important to him. Notice that verse 10 gives a full revealing account of just what the business of Elymas was, stating that he was a man ...*full of all subtilty and all mischief...* a ...*child of the devil...* an ...*enemy of all righteousness...* whose mission was ...*to pervert* (to distort, to turn aside, to oppose, plot against the saving purposes and plans of God, to turn aside from the right path, to corrupt) *the right ways of the Lord*. Thus we get a glimpse of the opposition that Satan would use to oppose Paul's gospel even being preached, and this was not just true only here for this kind of opposition from Satan was encountered everywhere Paul would go. In EPHESIANS 6:11 & 12 Paul later wrote wrote: *Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. 12 For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness {wicked spirits} in high {high: or, heavenly} places.* Study the rest of ACTS 13, and ACTS 14 to see for yourself the different manifestations of opposition Paul faced on his first missionary journey.

Back to our text in ACTS 16. ACTS 16:16 *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.* Verse 16 has three words in it that need explanation: "possessed," "divination," and "soothsaying." "Possessed" here simply means she had, or was possessed of a demon, and acted under the control of a demon. "Divination" covers a broad spectrum of foretelling future events apart from God. "Soothsaying" is defined as the art or practice of foretelling future events; fortune telling in other words. "Soothsaying" is also called the art or gift of prophecy, (or the pretense of prophecy) by supernatural means. "Soothsaying" falls under the broader heading of divination. "Soothsaying" has many forms such as a palm reading, or reading tea leaves. We are not specifically told by Luke in ACTS 16:16 what kind of "soothsaying" this damsel performed, but we do know that she was good at it, for she ...*brought her masters much gain by soothsaying*. Obviously this damsel was a slave girl who had many masters, all of them using her for their own profit. Perhaps they too were possessed by demons, but the scripture doesn't specifically address this. Their motive was money. No wonder the Apostle Paul was later able to write Timothy a fact that they both knew: 1 TIMOTHY 6:10 *For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

Now note in verse 16 that this ...*damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us...* . The Greek word translated here "met us" indicates a hostile encounter, thus the words she spoke in verse 17 were not spoken in love to say the least: ...*These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation*. This encounter didn't happen just once for we read in verse 18: *And this did she many days*. As this continued for many days we must realize that the actions of this damsel attracted a lot of extra attention to herself, and in turn to the Apostle Paul, and those with him. Furthermore we must also realize that the Apostle Paul also attracted a larger crowd every time he, and those with him assembled down by the riverside for prayer, and the preaching of the gospel.

Obviously Satan didn't like this, and sent his maidservant *...possessed with a spirit of divination...* in an attempt to hinder the spreading of Paul's gospel. Many commentators of scripture spent paragraphs trying to explain what this "spirit of divination" was. As racecourse runners we are encouraged to be "*Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith...*" HEBREWS 12:2 and thus we are not to be hindered by the obstacles He placed on our racecourse. Repeating what we said earlier, expect obstacles as you run this race to win Christ as Bridegroom. Again 2 CORINTHIANS 10:3-5 tells us: *For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: 4 (For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) 5 Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.* After many days the actions of this damsel became annoying to the Apostle Paul, and he being full of the Holy Ghost, and having himself been given the nine gifts of the Holy Spirit he wrote about in 1 CORINTHIANS 12:7-11, he obviously had the gift of "discerning of spirits," which he spoke of in 1 CORINTHIANS 12:10. Thus the Holy Ghost had showed him that this damsel was *...possessed with a spirit of divination.* Paul had also observed that this damsel brought her masters much gain by soothsaying. ACTS 16:18 continues: *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.* Note that Paul didn't command the spirit on his own accord to come out of the damsel, but rather he commanded the spirit by the power and authority that is in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. Paul waited until the Holy Ghost led him to say unto the spirit of divination: *...I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And he came out the same hour.*

What became of this damsel? Wouldn't we like to know the answer to this question? But the scripture doesn't specifically address this question. We do however get a good clue in ACTS 26:18 of the potential available to this damsel. ACTS 26:18 is part of that ninety-nine word sentence spoken unto Paul by the Lord Jesus Christ on the day he was saved on the road to Damascus. ACTS 26:18 says this after Paul was told he was being sent as an Apostle unto the Gentiles: *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.* Back in ACTS 16:18 the Lord Jesus Christ delivered this damsel from the spirit that possessed her, thus she was turned from darkness to light, and from the Power of Satan unto God. Did this damsel of ACTS 16 receive the forgiveness of sins that was now available unto her? Only God knows the answer to this question. We do not read of this damsel again. She was now really of no value to her masters, so after Jesus Christ set her free, did her masters also release her? We will learn the answers to these questions when we get to heaven.

One other question concerning this damsel, who was delivered from this evil spirit in the name of Jesus Christ; was she thankful? We have no way of knowing the answer to this question either for the scripture doesn't give us the answer. Let's think about this for a moment. Are we truly thankful for what the Lord does for us every moment of every day? One of the Old Testament worthies of faith can help us answer this question for ourselves. No doubt it was David who wrote in PSALMS 116:12 *What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?* David answers this question in PSALMS 103. PSALMS 103:1 <<A Psalm of David.>> *Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. 2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: 3 Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; 4 Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; 5 Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.* Truly David had a thankful heart for all things, as will all full overcomers. That is why the Apostle Paul also encouraged all of us in 1 THESSALONIANS 5:18 *In every thing give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

One more thought about thankfulness before moving on with this **midnight** Bible story here in ACTS 16. Let's look at something that happened in LUKE 17 during Jesus' ministry. LUKE 17:12 *And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood*

*afar off: 13 And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us. 14 And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed. 15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God, 16 And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and he was a Samaritan. 17 And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine? 18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger. 19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole.* There are several sermons contained in this portion of scripture, which the Holy Ghost can preach to your heart. For now note here that only one of the ten lepers returned to give praise, and thanks to Jesus after being healed, and with a loud voice glorified God, and he was a Samaritan. JOHN 4:9 informs us that “...*the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans,*...” but “...*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners...*” according to 1 TIMOTHY 1:15. JOEL 2:32 tells us “...*that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered,*...” and this scripture is quoted in ACTS 2:21, and ROMANS 10:13. ROMANS 2:11 also informs us: *For there is no respect of persons with God.* So Jesus had no problem healing this Samaritan leper, and this despised and rejected Samaritan realized, and appreciated the fact that he was healed more acutely than did the other Lepers, whom Jesus also healed. To this healed leper Jesus gave this commendation: *Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole...* LUKE 17:19.

As we move forward in our **midnight** Bible story of ACTS 16 realize that the events that began with the spirit of divination being cast out of this damsel in the name of Jesus Christ in verse 18, until the **midnight** earthquake in verse 26 all happened the same day. Whether or not the damsel ever expressed her thankfulness unto God for her deliverance, we know that Paul and Silas did. And we see this as we continue examining this **midnight** Bible story.

The damsels masters, who were also strongly influenced by Satan, were very upset at their sudden loss of income when the damsel was delivered from this evil demonic spirit. And as we will now read, they were very influential in Philippi. ACTS 16:19 *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.*

Let's examine these verses a little closer. Verse 19 informs us that the girls' masters realized that they had just lost their source of income, and they felt very comfortable in taking Paul and Silas into custody, and bringing them before the rulers of Philippi, whom they apparently knew. In verse 20 we read this statement: *These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city.* We note with these words a tone of prejudice against the Jews. And Satan has been against the Jews from the beginning. These slave masters were Romans, or Roman citizens, as verse 21 indicates. The thought never even crossed their mind that Paul and Silas may have been Roman citizens themselves. They were enraged at Paul and Silas, and must have felt superior to the Jews, thus they didn't express any remorse in calling Paul and Silas out, noting that they were Jews.

Paul never tried to hide the fact that he was a Jew, noting in PHILIPPIANS 3:5 that he was *...of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews; as touching the law, a Pharisee.* In ACTS 23:6 Paul further announced to the Sanhedrin Council that: *“I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee:...”* Additionally we know from ACTS 22:3 that Paul also said: *“I am verily a man which am a Jew, born in Tarsus, a city in Cilicia, yet brought up in this city at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers, and was zealous toward God, as ye all are this day.”* Gamaliel was a famous Jewish Rabbi doctor of the law of Moses, who is noted in history to also have born the title of “Rabban,” meaning he was the head of the Jewish Sanhedrin. As a Pharisee, and a doctor of the law, Gamaliel was held in highest esteem among the Jews of Jerusalem. Paul, having been taught by Gamaliel, a foremost teacher of the law, was a feather in Paul's cap (so to speak), and how proud his Pharisee father would have been of him. Being a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee, and having been taught by Gamaliel according to the

perfect manner of the law would have elevated Paul to the highest position that a Pharisee could achieve in Jewish Religion, and how all the Jews would have looked up to him.

We must realize that the Pharisee chose a manner of life different from the general Jewish public. They stood for the strict rigid observances of the letter and forms of the law of Moses. The Pharisee's were a society of men zealous for religion, who were further resolved not to eat any unclean thing, choosing rather to die, than they might not be defiled. In choosing this kind of separated life style they felt like they were on a higher plane than everyone else. The Pharisee sought for distinction and praise of men for their perceived rituals and so called good works. Josephus noted that there were a little more than 6000 Pharisee's. Josephus also noted that the Pharisee lived frugally, like the Stoics, and hence had so much weight with the multitude that if they said ought against the king or the high priest it was immediately believed. We further learned in our study on the life of the Apostle Paul that constantly in his travels he went to the synagogues first in every city he visited, that is if they had a synagogue. In the synagogues is where the Jews met for their Sabbath day services. Paul being a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee, and dressed as a Pharisee would be asked by the Jews in these synagogues to speak unto them. He was more than willing to do this, and even wrote in ROMANS 10:1 *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.* Many Jews got saved because of Paul's preaching. But as strange as it may sound, Paul's going to the synagogues also opened the door for him to speak unto the Gentiles. Recall in ACTS 13:14-41 Paul preaches a sermon in Antioch in Pisidia; one of the few complete sermons recorded by Paul in scripture. This sermon is left for us in scripture as a pattern sermon of what Paul first preached in the synagogues in every city he went. In ACTS 13:42 we read: *And when the Jews were gone out of the synagogue, the Gentiles besought that these words might be preached to them the next sabbath.* The next Sabbath day came, and so did the whole town to hear Paul preach. The Jews were envious and spoke against the words of the Apostle Paul, which was not really a smart thing to do in the eyes of God. ACTS 13:46-48 records what happened next: *Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles. 47 For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth. 48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord: and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.* Multiply this times the number of synagogues Paul attended and spoke to, and you can see how he preached to untold thousands of Jews, and in the process reached untold thousands of Gentiles.

Back in our **midnight** Bible story of ACTS 16 we read again this statement found in verse 20: *These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city.* We just explained how Paul always dressed in his Pharisee clothing, for his being a Pharisee from his youth was what The Holy Ghost used to open the door of opportunity for Paul to preach about Jesus Christ, and everlasting life unto both Jews and Gentiles everywhere he went. The point being Paul never attempted to hide the fact that he was a Jew. But the slave masters of the damsel, who was delivered from the evil spirit that possessed her by the Lord Jesus Christ at Paul's command, were furious over their loss of income. And they expressed their displeasure to the Philippian magistrates with an indignant tone of prejudice against the Jews. Prejudice against anyone is not a good thing, and furthermore prejudice will not be found in the heart of a full overcomer. Jesus was not prejudice against anyone was He? Again we repeat what is said in 1 TIMOTHY 1:15 *This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief.* Furthermore ROMANS 3:23 tells us: *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.* ROMANS 5:6 adds: *For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.* And ROMANS 5:8 goes on to state: *But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.* None of us can ever be saved without accepting Jesus Christ as our own personal Saviour, and Jesus came into this world as a Jew.



Interestingly scripture tells us why many in the world always have had prejudice against the Jew. Perhaps DEUTERONOMY 7 explains it best. DEUTERONOMY 7:6 For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. 7 *The LORD did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people:* 8 *But because the LORD loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the LORD brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.* 9 *Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;* 10 *And repayeth them that hate him to their face, to destroy them: he will not be slack to him that hateth him, he will repay him to his face.* How long is the thousand generations of verse 9? I have seen five generations pictures before, and the oldest is usually approaching ninety to one hundred years old. So if there are five generations in one hundred years, it would take twenty thousand years to get to one thousand generations!!! Now note this statement in verse 7: *...ye were the fewest of all people...* meaning fewest in number. Today it is estimated that there is approximately 7.7 billion people living in the world. About 0.2 % are Jewish!

DEUTERONOMY 7:14 goes on to state: Thou shalt be blessed above all people... . This statement was made unto the children of Israel, the Jews in other words. I am going to spend a few moments explaining this. There have been Nobel Prizes awarded to over 900 individuals. At least 20% of them were given to Jews! Some might argue, "well that isn't fair," but again DEUTERONOMY 7:6 and 14 tells us: For thou art an holy people unto the LORD thy God: the LORD thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. ...Thou shalt be blessed above all people. Let me give some other facts that were sent to me about two years ago. Israel the 100th smallest country, with less than 1/1000th of the world's population, can lay claim to the following: The cell phone was developed in Israel by the Israeli branch of Motorola, which has its largest development center in Israel. Microsoft - Israel, developed most of the Windows NT and XP operating systems. The Pentium MMX Chip technology was designed in Israel at Intel. Both the Pentium - 4 microprocessor and the Centrino processor were entirely designed developed and produced in Israel. The Pentium microprocessor in your computer was most likely made in Israel. Voice mail technology was developed in Israel. Both Microsoft and Cisco built their only research and development facilities outside the US in Israel. Four young Israelis developed the technology for the AOL Instant Messenger in 1996. Israel's \$100 billion economy is larger than all of its immediate neighbors combined. Israel per capita has the highest percentage in the world of home computers. According to industry officials, Israel designed the airline industry's most impenetrable flight security. US officials now look to Israel for advice on how to handle airborne security threats. Israel has the highest ratio of university degrees to the population in the world. Israel produces more scientific papers per capita than any other nation by a large margin - 109 per 10,000 people -- as well as one of the highest per capita rates of patents filed. In proportion to its population, Israel has the largest number of startup companies in the world, except the U.S.! (3,500 companies mostly in hi-tech). Israel is ranked #2 in the world for venture capital funds right behind the U.S. Israel has the highest average living standards in the Middle East. The per capita income in Israel in 2000 was over \$17,500, exceeding that of the UK. Twenty-four per cent of Israel's workforce holds university degrees, ranking third in the industrialized world, after the United States and Holland, and 12 per cent hold advanced degrees. In 1984 and 1991, Israel airlifted a total of 22,000 Ethiopian Jews, (Operation Moses (1984) and Solomon (1991)) at risk in Ethiopia, to safety in Israel. (One flight had 1,122 passengers, a world record for a single plane.) When the U. S. Embassy in Nairobi, Kenya was bombed in 1998, Israeli rescue teams were on the scene within a day, and saved three victims from the rubble. Israel has the third highest rate of entrepreneurship -- and the highest rate among women, and among people over 55 in the world. When Golda Meir was elected Prime Minister of Israel in 1969, she became the world's second elected female leader in modern times. Relative to its population, Israel is the largest immigrant-

absorbing nation on earth, whose many immigrants come in search of democracy, religious freedom, and economic opportunity. (Hundreds of thousands came from the former Soviet Union). Israel is the only country in the world that entered the 21st century with a net gain in its number of trees, made more remarkable because, this was achieved in an area considered mainly desert! The Middle East has been growing date palms for centuries. The average tree is about 18-20 feet tall and yields about 38 pounds of dates a year. Israeli date trees are now yielding 400 pounds/year and are short enough to be harvested from the ground or a short ladder. An Israeli company was the first to develop and install a large-scale solar-powered and fully functional electricity generating plant, in southern California's Mojave Desert. Israel has the world's second highest per capita of new books. Israel has more museums per capita than any other country. Israel has the fourth largest air force in the world (after the US, Russia and China). In addition to a large variety of other aircraft, Israel's air force has an aerial arsenal of over 250 F-16's. This is the largest fleet of F-16 aircraft outside of the U.S. In Medicine -- Israeli scientists developed the first fully computerized, no-radiation, diagnostic instrumentation for breast cancer. An Israeli company developed a computerized system for ensuring proper administration of medications, thus removing human error from medical treatment. Every year in U.S. Hospitals 7,000 patients die from treatment mistakes. Israel's Given Imaging developed the first ingestible video camera, so small it fits inside a pill. Used to view the small intestine from the inside, cancer and digestive disorders. Researchers in Israel developed a new device that directly helps the heart pump blood, an innovation with the potential to save lives among those with heart failure. The new device is synchronized with the camera helps doctors diagnose heart's mechanical operations through a sophisticated system of sensors. A new acne treatment developed in Israel, the Clear Light device, produces a high-intensity, ultraviolet-light-free, narrow-band blue light that causes acne bacteria to self-destruct -- all without damaging surrounding skin or tissue. Israel leads the world in the number of scientists and technicians in the workforce, with 145 per 10,000, as opposed to 85 in the U. S., over 70 in Japan, and less than 60 in Germany. In Israel over 25% of its work force is employed in technical professions. All the above Israeli accomplishments were made while engaged in regular wars with a relentless enemy that seeks its destruction, and an economy continuously under strain by having to spend more per capita on its own protection than any other county on earth.

All of what we just read was for told by God unto Abraham when he was still called Abram. GENESIS 12:1 *Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: 2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.* Later in GENESIS 22 we read: 15 *And the angel of the LORD called unto Abraham out of heaven the second time, 16 And said, By myself have I sworn, saith the LORD, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: 17 That in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; 18 And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice.* Later in GENESIS 28 Abrahams' grandson Jacob, whose name was later changed to Israel, dreamed a dream. GENESIS 28:12 *And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. 13 And, behold, the LORD stood above it, and said, I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; 14 And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth, and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.* Some of the modern day natural blessings we have been given by the descendants of Jacob we read about above. The greatest Jewish blessing is Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Paul explains this also in GALATIANS 3. GALATIANS 3:6 *Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. 7 Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham. 8 And the*

scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. 9 So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham. ...16 Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ. This is why Paul was able to confidently write in EPHESIANS 1:3 *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.* And one more correlated thought: PSALMS 122:6 *Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee.*

Now back to the statement made by the slave masters in ACTS 16:21 *...These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city.* We have just shown how foolish, and shortsighted this statement really was. In reality these men, Paul and Silas, being Jews were sent by the Holy Ghost unto Philippi to be a blessing unto them. Timothy and Luke not being mentioned here in verses 19 through 25 indicates that they were perceived more as followers than leaders at this point in time. The slave masters accusation was against Paul and Silas, who mission was to expound unto the Gentiles the way of salvation. Jesus said to the Samaritan woman in JOHN 4:22 *Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.* Paul later wrote in ROMANS 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.* The gospel of Christ was being preached here in Philippi, but what was being said was *...These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city...* ACTS 16:21. The Greek word translated trouble here (ektarasso {ek-tar-as'-so} number 1613 in the Strong's Greek Concordance) is only found this one time in scripture, and means: to agitate, to trouble exceedingly, to throw into great trouble, or to throw into confusion. Obviously Paul and Silas were not in Philippi to trouble the city, but were sent there by the Holy Ghost to help them of Macedonia as was noted in ACTS 16:9 when in a **midnight** vision: *...There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.* Obviously the slave masters in ACTS 16:21 didn't view Paul and Silas this way, and thus stated unto the magistrates: *...These men, being Jews, do exceedingly trouble our city...* in other words have thrown us, and our city into confusion. These kinds of actions that Paul faced nearly everywhere he went prompted him to later write in 1 CORINTHIANS 14:33 *For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.* Before Paul was saved and known as Saul of Tarsus, he exceedingly troubled the Christians in every city he visited, making havoc against the church. This he did with the approval of the Sanhedrin. Now as the Apostle Paul, he was (in their words) exceedingly troubling the sinners, and faced the kind of opposition he once dished out himself.

These slave masters must have felt some difficulty in stating their grievance before the city authorities, for the Roman law had no remedy for property being depreciated by exorcism. Thus these slave masters made an accusation unto the authorities in the following form: "These men are throwing the whole city into confusion: moreover they are Jews: and they are attempting to introduce new religious observances, which we, being Roman citizens, can not legally receive and adopt." This accusation was only partly true, and partly false. It was quite false that Paul and Silas were disturbing the colony, for nothing could have been more calm and orderly than their worship and teaching at the house of Lydia, or in the meeting place down by the riverside. However, I remember a time or two as a teenager when the Denver Police were called here at Living Waters Tabernacle, (at the old church across the street) because the neighbors complained of too much noise; prayer meeting noise. Brother Hill used to say: "It wasn't the noise that was bother them, it was the kind of noise." At that time the noise from DU stadium 3 miles away never seemed to disturb any of the neighbors.

As we go through this **midnight** Bible story let's do a quick review of what we are studying. In ACTS 16 the Apostle Paul starts what we call his second missionary journey. He takes with him Silas, a chief man from the church at Jerusalem, and a prophet as is noted in ACTS 15:22 & 32. We learned that Silas is found by two names in scripture, Silas and Silvanus. Luke calls him Silas, and Paul and Peter address him as Silvanus. Silvanus is the Latin for Silas, and Silas is the name we have for him thirteen times in ACTS, from ACTS 15:22 until ACTS 18:5. Four times we find Silas in

scripture as Silvanus, which means his name is found in scripture a total of seventeen times. Seventeen is the number that has to do with VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS, and certainly Silas many times demonstrated that fact in his life. One of the things that took place in Silas life on this journey is that he learns Paul's gospel message from the mouth of the Apostle Paul himself, as does Timothy, who joined Paul and Silas in ACTS 16:1-3. It was a long journey of several months from the time Timothy was added until they arrived at Philippi. Both Silas and Timothy become Church Apostles on this second missionary journey of Paul's. Just prior to arriving at Philippi, Luke joins them in Troas, and begins his first hand more detailed accounting of what happened next. While at Troas Paul had a vision from the Lord at a **midnight** hour in ACTS 16:9, where ...*There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.* Immediately the next day this group of four set sail for Philippi, and they arrived there within the week. ACTS 17:1 & 2 informs us that Paul's usual manner when first arriving at a city was to go unto the synagogue of the Jews, but there wasn't a synagogue of the Jews in Philippi. In Philippi there was an assembly point where prayer was made down by the riverside in an outdoor amphitheater type setting. It was women who came to this place, and there they heard Paul proclaim his gospel message according to ACTS 16:13-15. A woman named Lydia insisted that Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke abide at her house so she could learn more of Paul's gospel message first hand, which they did. Next we read in ACTS 16:16 *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.*

Before we read further, and get back to our **midnight** Bible story found in the next verses, we should realize something very important here, and that is the events found in the last part of ACTS 16:18 through ACTS 16:34 all happened in less than twenty-four hours. When scripture takes the time to record events that happen in a twenty-four hour time frame, they are to be noted, and studied as high water mark points left in the Word of God for our edification. So we find at the beginning of this day Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke going down to the riverside to pray as they had been doing for several days. And the last few days they have been met by ...*a certain damsel possessed with a spirit of divination met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying: 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...* as we just read in ACTS 16:16 & 17. On this particular day of our **midnight** Bible story we find as ACTS 16:18 continues: *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. 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,...* . So we find Paul and Silas being seized by the slave masters, and brought into the marketplace before the magistrates having attracted a multitude of bystanders in all of this commotion. This brings us up to the point in our **midnight** Bible story where we left off, so let's see what happens next.

The accusations against Paul and Silas by the slave masters continue in ACTS 16:21 after making the argument that Paul and Silas "...*do exceedingly trouble our city...*" in verse 20. ACTS 16:21 *And teach customs, which are not lawful for us to receive, neither to observe, being Romans.* To properly understand this statement we need to briefly review what the Roman law allowed, which is different than what we are accustomed to. Our forefathers in the first amendment to the U.S. Constitution wrote in part: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." We are accustomed to having freedom of religion, but this wasn't the case in Paul's day. Rome back in Paul's day permitted people to keep their religion as long as they worshipped the emperor and Roman gods. Simply stated, Roman law was opposed to the introduction of foreign religions, because such changes in worship were likely to unsettle the minds of the Roman citizens. The Jews were the ones exempted from this because of their belief in only one God, thus Jewish Synagogue worship was not interfered with by the Romans, and perhaps

this also partially explains why Paul always went to the synagogues first in every city he visited as he traveled through the Roman Empire. Nevertheless during this same time frame the Roman Emperor Claudius had expelled the Jews from Rome for political reasons. We read this also in ACTS 18:2 when Paul first came to Corinth where he *...found a certain Jew named Aquila, born in Pontus, lately come from Italy, with his wife Priscilla; (because that Claudius had commanded all Jews to depart from Rome:)*. Perhaps the magistrates at Philippi were of this same mindset, and had prejudice against the Jews just like the Emperor had recently expressed by expelling the Jews from Rome. So we find in ACTS 16:21 that these slave masters were charging the Apostles with introducing a new religion, which was unauthorized by the Roman law, thus exciting the population at the market place into riot mode.

ACTS 16:22 *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.* Lynch mob mentality over ruled proper justice here. The thought never occurred to the magistrates that Paul and Silas were also Roman citizens, (see verse 37) who had certain privileges that non-citizens didn't have. These privileges included (1) exemption from scourging, (2) freedom from arrest (except in extreme cases), and (3) the right to appeal from the magistrate all the way up to the Emperor. In time during the rest of his life the Apostle Paul would use all of these privileges. And perhaps that was a lesson learned here in Philippi by the Apostle Paul.

We see in ACTS 22 Paul addressing this very point after his arrest in Jerusalem, and being put into the custody of the Roman soldiers. ACTS 22:24 *The chief captain commanded him to be brought into the castle, and bade that he should be examined by scourging; that he might know wherefore they cried so against him. 25 And as they bound him with thongs, Paul said unto the centurion that stood by, Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned? 26 When the centurion heard that, he went and told the chief captain, saying, Take heed what thou doest: for this man is a Roman. 27 Then the chief captain came, and said unto him, Tell me, art thou a Roman? He said, Yea. 28 And the chief captain answered, With a great sum obtained I this freedom. And Paul said, But I was free born. 29 Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had bound him.* Note again that a Roman citizen was exempt from scourging, which is why Paul asked the centurion in ACTS 22:25 *Is it lawful for you to scourge a man that is a Roman, and uncondemned?* And why now was the chief captain afraid after he learned that Paul was a Roman citizen? The chief captain was afraid because it was illegal to torture a Roman citizen, and a heinous crime to bind a Roman citizen, thus the chief captain was in violation of the laws of the Empire! The penalty for those who violated the law of the Roman Empire was death, and the confiscation of his property!

Back in ACTS 16:22 here at Philippi the lynch mob mentality over ruled proper protocol, and Paul and Silas were hastily arrested, scourged, and put into prison. And thus the magistrates were the ones in violation of Roman law, but at the time of this frenzy that thought never crossed their mind. Later in this study we will find in ACTS 16:35 through 40 that the magistrates had second thoughts concerning Paul and Silas once they found out they were also Roman citizens, and essentially begged Paul and Silas to leave Philippi.

There are several interesting lessons to be learned here also. Note in ACTS 16:22 and 23 that Paul and Silas were unjustly arrested, beaten, and received many stripes, and were cast into prison, all contrary to Roman law. To say the least this was quite a day Paul and Silas were having, so far! ROMANS 8:28 wasn't yet a scripture, but this verse was being worked into Paul's life that day. ROMANS 8:28 states: *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.* It may have been hard to see how this was working together for his good, but by faith Paul, and Silas too knew that the events of this most memorable day were working for their good. This beating, and receiving many stripes became a

testimony of both Paul and Silas that followed them the rest of their lives. Paul even mentions it like this in his first epistle, which was written unto the church of the Thessalonians, whom he first visited within the next month of his life: 1 THESSALONIANS 2:1 *For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain: 2 But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention. 1 THESSALONIANS 3:4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.* Paul even wrote in PHILIPPIANS 1:12 to these same Saints in Philippi that witnessed his trouble here at Philippi: *But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.* They first witnessed this during the time frame of ACTS 16. In fact many of the Philippian Saints became believers because of the afflictions Paul went through on this special day recorded in ACTS 16, and many of them were even eye-witnesses of this.

One of the many things that came out of this visit to Philippi was the joy book of the Bible. The joy book of the Bible is PHILIPPIANS. PHILIPPIANS was written from Paul's prison cell in Rome in 62 A.D. according to the timetable of Conybeare and Howson. Let's note a couple of more highlights from PHILIPPIANS starting in chapter 3. The American Standard Version of PHILIPPIANS 3:20 reads: "For our citizenship is in heaven; whence also we wait for a Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." As a citizen of heaven Paul knew his eternal rights, and one of those rights we have discussed at length previously; 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.* This was Paul's testimony to those Saints of Philippi, some of whom witnessed his ill treatment in the verses we are currently studying in ACTS 16:22-24. Paul also encouraged the Philippian Saints in PHILIPPIANS 3:17 *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.* In the previous verses Paul explained what this meant. PHILIPPIANS 3:8 *Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, 9 And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith: 10 That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; 11 If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.* Suffering with Christ Jesus became a pattern in the life of the Apostle Paul, and as we have many times noted before, this suffering with Christ Jesus is something that all full overcomers must face in order to win Christ as Bridegroom! As the Apostle to the Gentiles, Paul was in the greatest sense sent out to preach about the unsearchable riches we have in Christ Jesus, and to urge Christians to be race course runners, running to win Christ as their Bridegroom, much the same as Eliezer of old told Rebekah about her husband to be, Isaac. Paul adds the following encouragement starting in PHILIPPIANS 3:13 *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, 14 I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. 15 Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you. 16 Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. 17 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.* The short version of all of this is for us, as citizens of heaven, to be focused upon heavenly things, always looking unto Jesus the Author and finisher of our faith as we press for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus! And aren't you thankful that you know what the prize of the high calling in Christ Jesus is?

The events we are studying about in ACTS 16 record the first severe opposition Paul faced on this second missionary journey. In most of the cities Paul visited on his missionary journeys he faced some kind of hostility, which is evidenced by studying Paul three missionary journeys found in ACTS chapters 13 through 19. Recall that on his previous first missionary journey Paul first faced a sorcerer, a Jew named Bar-jesus, who withstood him to the face at Paphos. {Review ACTS 13:6-12.} Next stop was Antioch in Pisidia, where Paul preached, and within a short time the Jews then



expelled Paul and Barnabas from their city. This is recorded in ACTS 13:50 *But the Jews stirred up the devout and honourable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts.* Paul and Barnabas next went to Iconium, and according to ACTS 14:3 they were there a “long time.” The unbelieving Jews of Iconium eventually ...*stirred up the Gentiles, and made their minds evil affected against the brethren...* ACTS 14:2 – “the brethren” in this portion of scripture again meaning the Apostles Paul and Barnabas. ACTS 14:5-7 tells what happened next: *And when there was an assault made both of the Gentiles, and also of the Jews with their rulers, to use them despitefully, and to stone them, 6 They were ware of it, and fled unto Lystra and Derbe, cities of Lycaonia, and unto the region that lieth round about: 7 And there they preached the gospel.* Note next what happened while at Lystra in ACTS 14:19: *And there came thither certain Jews from Antioch and Iconium, who persuaded the people, and, having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead.* It is interesting to note that on this first missionary journey it was mainly the Jews who triggered the opposition against Paul and Barnabas, persuading chief men, honorable women, and then the Gentiles into attack mode. The Lord Jesus Christ told Paul on the road to Damascus on the day he was saved that he being sent unto the Gentiles, and that he would be opposed, first by the Jews, and also by the Gentiles. We read this in ACTS 26:17 *Delivering thee from the people, (the Jews) and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee...* . Three days later Ananias of Damascus was sent to Paul by the Lord Jesus Christ, and we read in ACTS 9:15 & 16 what Ananias of Damascus was told. ACTS 9:15 *But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.* Suffering for Jesus Christ's namesake is one of the doctrines taught by Paul, and in fact no other writer of scripture wrote more about the doctrine of suffering with Christ than the Apostle Paul, and we have mentioned this many times previously in this study, and will add some more thoughts on this topic as we progress.

The opposition we read about on Paul's first missionary in the cities he visited was primarily brought about by Jewish persuasion as we noted above. Here at Philippi on Paul's second missionary journey it was hateful Gentile slave masters who first attacked Paul and Silas, dragged them (probably by the feet) unto the magistrates of Philippi saying in ACTS 16:20 *...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.* We briefly mentioned earlier that these slave masters must have felt some difficulty in stating their grievance before the city authorities, for the Roman law had no remedy for property being depreciated by exorcism. Thus these slave masters made an accusation unto the authorities in the following form: “These men are throwing the whole city into confusion: moreover they are Jews: and they are attempting to introduce new religious observances, which we, being Roman citizens, can not legally receive and adopt.” This accusation was only partly true, and partly false. It was quite false that Paul and Silas were disturbing the colony, for nothing could have been more calm and orderly than their worship and teaching at the house of Lydia, or in the meeting place down by the riverside. It was true that Paul especially here taught the sound, and good doctrine of the Lord, which did indeed show the way of salvation by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. Roman law was opposed to the introduction of foreign religions, because such changes in worship were likely to unsettle the minds of the Roman citizens. However, as we pointed out earlier in this study, Rome back in Paul's day, permitted people to keep their religion as long as they worshipped the emperor and Roman gods. The Jews were the ones exempted from this part of Roman law because of their belief in only one God, thus Jewish Synagogue worship was not to be interfered with by the Romans. However the Jews did not have a synagogue at Philippi, thus the populace of Philippi would probably not have been familiar with that part of Roman law. It is pretty evident that these slave masters, who were accusing Paul and Silas, cared little for either the religion of the Romans, or of the Jews.

We should also note here that Paul never went about to unsettle the minds of the Roman citizens. In fact Paul even wrote in his letter unto the ROMANS in chapter 13 verse 1 *Let every soul*

*be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.* In Jesus day the question was asked of some Pharisees trying to entrap Jesus in MARK 12:14 when they asked: *Is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar, or not?* Jesus gave them this answer on MARK 12:17 *And Jesus answering said unto them, Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.* The point of mentioning this is to point out that neither Jesus nor Paul were in the business of offending the Romans, but rather their focus was upon the things of God. That is why Paul also made sure in his teaching that when the topic of subjection came up concerning Roman law, it was to be recognized by believers that the magistrates of the Roman Empire were put in place ultimately by the will of God. The last part of DANIEL 4:17 informs us: *...that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.* DANIEL 4:25 & 32, DANIEL 5:21 basically repeat this same theme. That's why Paul wrote in ROMANS 13:1 *...the powers that be are ordained of God.* And Paul continues in ROMANS 13:7 repeating the same thought Jesus expressed above: *Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.*

Having been incited by the slave masters, who had dragged Paul and Silas to the market place, and having presented them to the Roman magistrates of Philippi with these accusations, we read next in ACTS 16:22 *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.* We mentioned earlier that the thought never occurred to the magistrates that Paul and Silas were also Roman citizens, (see verse 37) who had certain privileges that non-citizens didn't have. These privileges included (1) exemption from scourging, (2) freedom from arrest (except in extreme cases), and (3) the right to appeal from the magistrate all the way up to the Emperor. Thus we find Paul and Silas were unjustly arrested accorded to Roman law, and scourged, whipped, and beaten with rods contrary to Roman law. Since it was illegal to torture a Roman citizen, and a heinous crime to bind a Roman citizen, the Roman magistrates of Philippi were in violation of the laws of the Empire! The penalty for those who violated the law of the Roman Empire was death, and the confiscation of their property! All Paul and Silas now needed was a good lawyer, and these magistrates could be put to death!

Let's examine this kind of thinking for a moment. Certainly Paul and Silas were unjustly treated here at Philippi, and a legal remedy could have been pursued by them where the end result would have been the death of the Philippian Roman magistrates, but that is not to be the remedy to be found in the heart attitude of the full overcomer. Obstacles are placed on the full overcomers path for a reason, and that reason boils down to this: *The just shall live by faith...* ROMANS 1:17; GALATIANS 3:11; and HEBREWS 10:38. Our Apostle Paul actually expounds further on the heart attitude of the full overcomer in ROMANS 12 as we will see in the following verses. ROMANS 12:1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. 2 And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. 3 For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. ...9 Let love be without dissimulation. (perfectly sincere, without deceit or hypocrisy) Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good. ...14 Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. 15 Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. 16 Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits. 17 Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. 18 If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. 19 Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: (allow room for God's anger) for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord. ...21 Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Thus we note that Paul and Silas in ACTS 16*

were being tested as potential full overcomers, and ambassadors for Christ here at Philippi, and were still confident that God had called them to this basically God forsaken place, and had allowed them to be beaten and thrown into the inner prison!

This most eventful, and memorable day reaches sunset with Paul and Silas in the care of the Philippian jailor, who according to ACTS 16:24 *...thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.* Note that they were “thrust into the inner prison,” meaning put into the darkest most secure part of the prison, probably a dungeon, without regard as to their well being. 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, or relief in this condition.

Remember our take away from Hebrews 11? The darkest of times brought forth the hero’s of faith. Paul and Silas certainly were being tested with this kind of trial here at Philippi. Brother Joe Rogers pointed out something to me that he came across in his studies a couple of weeks ago, and it had to do with the phrase “the apple of his eye,” which is first found in DEUTERONOMY 32:10 where the Moses was speaking to the children of Israel the words of the song of Moses. And DEUTERONOMY 32:10 references God’s thoughts about the children of Israel here when Moses says: *He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye.* The meaning in DEUTERONOMY 32:10 of “the apple of his eye” references the pupil of the eye, in other words the dark center part of the eye. The Hebrew word translated “apple” here also has another meaning, and that is the middle of the night (that is the deepest blackness part of the night), and this meaning is found in PROVERBS 7:9 *In the twilight, in the evening, in the black and dark night.* Our **midnight** Bible stories highlights the darkest of times when a test or a trial has reached its seemingly darkest, hopeless point. Old Testament worthy of faith David wrote in PSALMS 17:8 *Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,...* so we see that the phrase “the apple of his eye” can be also applied to the individual. Brother Hill used to point out that God looks at us as “the apple of His eye,” and would not allow anything to penetrate “the apple of His eye.” I found it interesting that the word “apple” is only found in eight scriptures, three times in reference to an apple tree, and five times in reference to “the apple of his eye.” Yes, you indeed are “the apple of His eye.”

Back to Paul and Silas in ACTS 16, this certainly was quite a day the Lord had fore ordained for our Apostles to say the least. And Paul and Silas certainly were not treated with dignity, and respect by anyone of the Philippian multitude, including the jailor. The **midnight** vision Paul had seen in ACTS 16:9 didn’t seem to make sense at this point in time: *...There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.* The Apostle Paul was second to none in knowing his Old Testament scriptures, and certainly he knew what ISAIAH 55:8 & 9 says. ISAIAH 55:8 *For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.* Little did Paul and Silas realize at this point in time that the Lord had now given them the keys to the city of Philippi!!! Let that thought soak in for a moment. God’s thoughts, and God’s ways are way beyond our kind of thinking, so it was hard to realize that

this was the day that God opened the city of Philippi unto Paul and Silas. By morning Paul and Silas would see the door of Philippi being opened unto them. Before being brought before the magistrates at Philippi, the majority at Philippi didn't even know Paul and Silas existed. Now nearly the whole town knew they were there, and now the whole town thought they had gotten rid of Paul and Silas having learned nothing of Paul's gospel message. Of course Lydia, and her little group of prayer warriors knew some of Paul's gospel message, but the majority of Philippi didn't.

Things began to change that particular **midnight** for those of Philippi because of the two Apostles, Paul and Silas. The other Philippian prisoners, and the Philippian jailor, and his family, were the next beneficiaries to hear Paul's gospel message; yet it wasn't a sermon that Paul would preach here. It was the actions of Paul and Silas that spoke unto the prisoner's and the jailor Paul's gospel message. God had sent Paul and Silas to speak unto the basest, and disreputable men of Philippi; men whom they couldn't even see because of the darkness of **midnight**. ACTS 16:25 records how this came about: *And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.* Note here that at **midnight** Paul and Silas prayed, and at **midnight** Paul and Silas sang praises unto God at the darkest hour of the **midnight**, from the darkest part of the prison, the inner prison! And the prisoners heard them praying and singing praises unto God at this **midnight** hour. What was going on here? To find out let's take the time to examine in some greater depth ACTS 16:25 in three sections, because there is much inner workings of the Lord going on here.

First we read in 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." But 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 unto Him. Paul and Silas were praising God, and thanking God! Keep in mind it was **midnight**, the darkest hour of the night, and the darkest hour they have faced so far 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. And they weren't quiet about praying either for the prisoners heard them. Even though it was **midnight**, Paul and Silas were not overcome with the **midnight** 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.* Memorize these verses. One more scripture that the Apostle Paul wrote in EPHESIANS 6:18 tells is to be *...Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints;...* . It's easy to be thankful, and rejoicing when things are going good, but how about when the opposite is taking place, and your whole world seems to be falling apart? HEBREWS 13:8 is still true: *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.* Jesus Christ is still the same Lord over all, who is rich unto all who call upon Him according to ROMANS 10:12. So we learn here a secret to overcoming in our quest to have God's best, and that is to: *Pray without ceasing...* 1 THESSALONIANS 5:17, *...and be ye thankful...* COLOSSIANS 3:15.

Having now read the above scriptures, let's look at the second section of ACTS 16:25, and receive further encouragement. 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 one's sincere heart that is overflowing with the love of God. Recall that the word "**midnight**" is found fourteen times in our King James Version of the Bible, and that fourteen is the number pointing to DELIVERANCE or SALVATION. Paul and Silas didn't know this, but you and I do, so we should expect this **midnight** trial that they were facing to end with their DELIVERANCE from this dungeon. In the meantime Paul and Silas ...*sang praises unto 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, and seemingly endless **midnight** situation! Circumstances dictated that Paul and Silas were here hopeless and helpless, yet the songs of praise just kept flowing out of their mouth as if they had been set free. There they were in the deepest, and darkest most secure part of the prison, with no outside hope of being set free from this situation, and yet they ...*sang praises unto God*:... ! And it was **midnight**! And the prisoners heard them, so they were quiet about singing praises unto God. This should speak volumes unto each of our hearts. 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16 states simply: *Rejoice evermore*. This short verse has no time restrictions, and means that we are to ...*Rejoice evermore*... irrespective of circumstance, or situation; 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; songs that just simply sing themselves. Here is a couple more correlated portions of scripture from Paul's prison epistles that further expound upon these thoughts. COLOSSIANS 3:15 *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful. 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. 17 And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.* EPHESIANS 5:18 *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; 19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; 20 Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

Israel's hymnal was the book of PSALMS. The spiritual songs and hymns from PSALMS were tunes that both Paul and Silas had sung many times before in the various church services they had been a part of. Singing these songs, and hymns as they traveled along life's pathway may have helped them make the miles grow shorter on this second missionary journey they have been on. Imagine now Paul, and or Silas, or perhaps both together sing at this **midnight** hour the following Psalm: PSALMS 23:

"The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want; He maketh me down to lie,  
in pastures green; He leadeth me the quiet waters by."

"My soul he doth restore again, and me to walk doth make,  
with in the paths of righteousness, even for His own name's sake."

"Yea, though I walk in death's dark vale, yet will I fear none ill,  
for thou art with me; and thy rod and staff me comfort still."

"My table thou hast furnished in presence of my foes;  
my head thou doest with oil anoint, and my cup over flows."

"Goodness and mercy all my life shall surely follow me;  
and in God's house forevermore my dwelling place shall be."

No doubt such singing calmed the **midnight** hour, and brought some relief to our two Apostles. Perhaps they also sang the 70<sup>th</sup> PSALMS. PSALMS 70:1 *Make haste, O God, to deliver me; make haste to help me, O LORD. 2 Let them be ashamed and confounded that seek after my soul: let them be turned backward, and put to confusion, that desire my hurt. 3 Let them be turned back for a reward of their shame that say, Aha, aha. 4 Let all those that seek thee rejoice and be glad in thee: and let such as love thy salvation say continually, Let God be magnified. 5 But I am poor and needy: make haste unto me, O God: thou art my help and my deliverer; O LORD, make no tarrying.*

We are not told in ACTS 16:25 the songs Paul and Silas sang, we are only told that Paul and Silas *...sang praises unto God...* and they weren't quiet about it either for we are also told that *...the prisoners heard them*. 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 songs echoes in our heart for years to come, and in our heart we can still hear the singer. This was the case this **midnight** when Paul and Silas from their dungeon *...sang praises unto God*. These songs that Paul and Silas caroled were uplifting, and upward looking songs; songs of **hope** and faith; songs of rejoicing; songs directed to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who 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 our memory verses above from PHILIPPIANS 4:4 through 7 reads: PHILIPPIANS 4:4 *Rejoice in the Lord always: 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.* 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.

Let's discuss this kind of **hope** in the Lord for a moment. It is interesting that the Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle Paul to write the word "**hope**" fifteen times in the epistle to the ROMANS. Fifteen again is the number having to do with REST, and we can be certain that the Apostle Paul knew what David wrote in PSALMS 37:7 *Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for him: fret not thyself because of him who prospereth in his way, because of the man who bringeth wicked devices to pass.* The epistle written unto the ROMANS was penned after the Apostle Paul himself had experienced such relief in the time of **midnight** trial, and he wrote with solid conviction the following words of **hope** found in ROMANS. Note as we go through these verses in ROMANS 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, whom we patiently wait, and **hope** for His soon coming! 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.*

In ACTS 16:25 we have been discussing how Paul and Silas after being beaten with rods, and cast into the inner prison at Philippi were found praying and singing praises unto God at **midnight**! In JOB 35:10 we read that it is God ...*who giveth songs in the **night**.* In PSALMS 42:8 we read another portion of scripture that Paul and Silas were familiar with: *Yet the LORD will command his lovingkindness in the daytime, and in the **night** his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life.* Our two Apostles were now living the reality of these two scriptures. Furthermore Paul and Silas must have realized, by faith, that they were indeed were given by the Lord the charge of this prison, much as Joseph was back in GENESIS 39. GENESIS 39:20 *And Joseph's master took him, and put him into the prison, a place where the king's prisoners were bound: and he was there in the prison. 21 But the LORD was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison. 22 And the keeper of the prison committed to Joseph's hand all the prisoners that were in the prison; and whatsoever they did there, he was the doer of it. 23 The keeper of the prison looked not to any thing that was under his hand; because the LORD was with him, and that which he did, the LORD made it to prosper.* Paul's second missionary journey was beginning to prosper at this **midnight** hour of ACTS 16:25; a fact that Paul and Silas could only see by faith. It becomes apparent as we read on that Paul, and Silas were indeed ministering, and being a witness unto their fellow prisoners. Recall also what we read above in COLOSSIANS 3:16 *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.* There is no time limit as to when one may teach and admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, so such singing at a **midnight** hour was totally in order, and certainly was uplifting to our two Apostles. The word "admonishing" here has to do with the imparting of positive truth according to Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words. So who were Paul and Silas imparting positive truths to? Certainly they were teaching and admonishing each other this **midnight** hour with their praying and singing praises unto God, but as we just noted they were also being witnesses unto their fellow prisoners. Again Paul and Silas were given by the Lord the charge of this prison.

The third part of ACTS 16:25 begins to tell us this, and causes us to focus upon the other prisoners in this Philippian jail. ACTS 16:25 *And at **midnight** Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them.* This is the first of four successive verses that addresses the fellow prisoners here at Philippi. In this third part of ACTS 16:25 we find that the prisoners heard the praying and singing of Paul and Silas. 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 Paul and Silas' voices, which could only be there by the power that is found in the Holy Ghost. These weren't timid words of prayer, and softly spoken songs, but rather Paul and Silas were loud in praying, and singing praises unto the Lord. Their prayers, and their songs carried a sweet tone to it that these prisoners had never heard before. The prisoners had heard moaning and groaning at **midnight** before, but never had they heard a **midnight** worship service complete with the singing of praises unto the Lord, who never sleeps nor slumbers. No doubt it got real quiet in the prison that **midnight**, and the prisoners listened intently to what Paul and Silas were saying, and singing. The last part of ACTS 16:25 emphasizes this point noting that ...*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 powerful gospel message that these very same prisoners had never heard before either. The reality was that the fellow prisoners of Paul and Silas here at Philippi were held spell bound by the message they were hearing from our Apostles at this **midnight** hour. So as we move forward from verse 25 keep in mind that the prisoners heard Paul and Silas loud and clear, and the Apostles songs and prayers pricked the prisoners hearts.

*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.*

There are a lot of things to consider here in these **midnight** happenings. God was very gracious here to Paul and Silas, and to the other prisoners by having them be already awake at this **midnight** hour. An earthquake is startling enough, but to be awakened from sleep by a great earthquake, like the Philippian jailor was, would add another terrifying element, and panic to the **midnight** darkness. We find the Philippian Jailor in such a state of mind in these verses, but not Paul, and Silas, and the other prisoners. There was something divine, and miraculous that took place that **midnight** down at the prison, and not only did Paul and Silas know it, but so did the prisoners! One has to wonder a little as to what might have been said in the **midnight** prayers of Paul and Silas. Did the Holy Ghost inspire Paul, or Silas to quote in their prayers some of ISAIAH 61:1? ISAIAH 61:1 states: *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.* Whether or not this was verbalized or not by Paul, or Silas, their prayers must have included these kinds of thoughts, and the prisoners heard them. This sudden great **midnight** earthquake had certainly set them free. I find it interesting that we find the word “earthquake” sixteen times in scripture, the number associated with LOVE, and the term “great earthquake” is found in five scripture; five being the number pointing to GRACE. Truly we find the facts of TITUS 2:11 present in Paul’s prison this **midnight**. TITUS 2:11 *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.* The phrase “grace of God” is also found sixteen times in scriptures that Paul wrote, emphasizing to us the LOVE of God also. We find this point underlined by the Apostle Paul in 2 THESSALONIANS 3:5 *And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.* We truly find the Lord directing the hearts of Paul and Silas into the love of God at this **midnight** hour as they also patiently wait for Christ. And the Lord manifest His presence when *...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...* ACTS 16:26.

This otherwise startling **midnight** great earthquake harmed no one. Think about that for a moment. Furthermore none of the prisoners escaped even though they had all just been set free! This sudden great earthquake was God’s response to Paul and Silas’ praying, and singing. Ray Quintana once noted in one of his messages that God enjoyed their singing so much, He sang base. This great earthquake emphasized to all in the Philippian prison the presence of God. God’s fingerprints were all over this great **midnight** earthquake, and we see this in ACTS 16:26 if we just take the time to notice. We have all seen the carnage of a great earthquake, and when the foundations shake, the whole building falls, and the roof collapses, and people are trapped inside. Not so here at Philippi. We are told in ACTS 16:26 *...that the foundations of the prison were shaken: and immediately all the doors were opened.* The prison roof did not collapse, but all the doors immediately were opened. This is not the first time in the book of ACTS where the Lord opened locked prison doors. Back in ACTS 5:17-20 we find a second major persecution of the Kingdom Apostles after many signs, and wonders were wrought among the people in Jerusalem by the hands of the Apostles according to

ACTS 5:12. The high priest then put them in prison as is told in ACTS 5:17-20. ACTS 5:17 *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, opening the locked prison doors for them. Then in our previous **midnight** Bible story of Peter's **midnight** escape from prison in ACTS 12 we read a similar account. ACTS 12:6 *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.* Here again the angel of the Lord unlocked the prison doors for Peter, and the gate of the city. Additionally here the angel of the Lord removed the chains by which Peter was bound. Now note here in ACTS 26:26 that after the prison doors were opened we read in the last part of verse 26 that *...every one's bands were loosed.* Once again 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 earthquake itself would not have loosed the prisoner's 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.* 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.* So we find *...If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed...* and furthermore *...he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.* The prayer of the Macedonian man in ACTS 16:9, that Paul heard in his **midnight** vision, who said "Come over into Macedonia, and help us," certainly applied to each of these Philippian prisoners, for Paul did indeed help them, pointing them at a **midnight** hour unto the Deliverer, and Saviour, the Light of the world, who is the Lord Jesus Christ. And the Lord truly set them free from their bonds that **midnight**. More importantly in reading between the lines we see that they also had the opportunity to be set free from their bonds of sin that **midnight**. We will discuss more on this thought in a moment.

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 with the Roman law, and customs 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. We saw this in ACTS 12:19 after the Lord helped Peter escape in the previous verses. ACTS 12:19 *And when Herod had sought for him, and found him not, he examined the keepers, and commanded that they should be put to death.* Had just one of Paul's fellow prisoners escaped here at Philippi, the fate of the jailor would have been death.

Before we proceed to the next verses in our **midnight** Bible story of ACTS 16, let's look at some doctrine our Apostle Paul wrote about wisdom in 1 CORINTHIANS, ROMANS and COLOSSIANS, which is manifest in the next verses of our **midnight** Bible story. Let's read first a

few verses from 1 CORINTHIANS 12. 1 CORINTHIANS 12:4 *Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. 5 And there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord. 6 And there are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. 7 But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal. 8 For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; 9 To another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; 10 To another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues: 11 But all these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.* In verses 8 through 10 here Paul lists nine different spiritual gifts that are manifest by the Holy Ghost; gifts that are distributed to each Holy Ghost filled believer as God pleases. In 1 CORINTHIANS 12:8 Paul mentions two correlated gifts, which we will find Paul inspired by the Holy Ghost to use at this **midnight** hour we have been examining in ACTS 16, which are a **word of wisdom**, and a **word of knowledge**. We actually find the phrase “**wisdom and knowledge**” seven times in scripture, which points to the SPIRITUAL PERFECTION that is found in Christ Jesus. In COLOSSIANS 2 our Apostle Paul tells us of the “**wisdom and knowledge**” that is found in Christ Jesus stating in COLOSSIANS 2:3 *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.* In ROMANS 11:33 Paul wrote: *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!* Paul also spent much of the first chapter of 1 CORINTHIANS expounding upon the topic of **wisdom**, and he wrote this in 1 CORINTHIANS 1:30 *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.* One more portion of scripture about **wisdom** before we move on is found in JAMES 1. JAMES 1:5 *If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. 6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.* Certainly our Apostle Paul had already requested the “**wisdom and knowledge**” of the Lord to help him, and Silas through this dark **midnight** hour of ACTS 16.

Returning to our **midnight** Bible story in ACTS 16 we find the Apostle Paul, full of the **wisdom** of the Holy Ghost, on this dark **midnight** perceiving that the jailor was about to take his own life, so he cried out ...*with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here...* in ACTS 16:28. The perspective that we must first view this scene is from the heart of Paul; a man full of the Holy Ghost; a man who is living by faith; a race course runner, and potential full overcomer; a man, who in his heart knows that the Lord has really given him the keys to the city of Philippi, which really unlocks to him all of Macedonia. So Paul now realizes, by faith, that the Lord had indeed put Paul in charge of the prison this **midnight**! The same Holy Ghost who made known unto Paul the jailors intentions to kill himself, also assured Paul that all of the prisoners were still present, and accounted for. It was the Lord who gave Paul this “**wisdom and knowledge**” at this dark **midnight** hour. Paul saw these things with a full assurance of faith even before a light was brought in! There also was an over whelming presence of the Lord felt by all the prisoners because of Paul and Silas’ **midnight** prayers, and praises, and a sense of relief must have been felt by all of the prisoners for the divine protection given them by the Lord during this great earthquake. Though set free by the Lord this **midnight**, Paul knew ...*we are all here...* in ACTS 16:28. Implied in this statement is the thought ...*we are all here...* under the protection of the Lord, thus no harm has come upon us: *Do thyself no harm!!* We have already noted how these Philippian prisoners were privileged to hear on this dark **midnight** encouraging, and enlightened Holy Ghost inspired words of prayer and praise from our suffering Apostles, Paul and Silas, which they had listened to attentively. We also made mention 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. Why? We should 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 these captives 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 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?

These prisoners were kind of like the disciples of Jesus found 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.* Our 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 now had been set free!

Now let's view this **midnight** scene from the perspective of the jailor, whose instructions from the magistrates in verse 23 were to keep them (Paul and Silas) safely. Imagine the adrenaline that was flowing in the veins of the jailor having been startled out of a deep sleep at **midnight** by a great earthquake so powerful that it shook the very foundations of the prison, and caused all the prison doors to open. Then his adrenaline kicked up a notch as the jailor made the assumption that these two men, Paul and Silas, who were to be kept securely so they couldn't escape, were gone. Additionally through the jailor's mind came the thought that perhaps all of the prisoners had escaped. With such a mindset the jailor's thinking was to take his own life with his own sword. It was at this moment that the Holy Ghost prompted Paul to cry out with an urgent tone in his loudest voice the words of "**wisdom and knowledge**" we talked about earlier: *...Do thyself no harm: for we are all here...* ACTS 16:28. The skeptical jailor, shaking and trembling, then called for a light. We read this in ACTS 16:29 *Then he (the jailor) called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas,...* . Where were Paul and Silas? Paul and Silas were right where the jailor had put them in verse 24 when he *...thrust them into the inner prison, and made their feet fast in the stocks.* Of course the Lord had now loosed Paul and Silas' from the stocks according to verse 26, and the Lord had set all the other prisoners bands free too! But they were all still in the prison as the jailor's light now revealed, and Paul and Silas were still in their filthy cell. The jailor we are told then "sprang in;" that is he rushed into Paul and Silas' cell. We are further told that the jailor *...came trembling...* . The Greek word here translated "trembling" is *entromos*, number 1790 in The Strong's Greek Concordance; a word found only three times in New Testament scripture. In our text of ACTS 16:29 *entromos* means: trembling with fear. The other two times where we find this word *entromos* is in ACTS 7, and HEBREWS 12 where in both instances a reference to Moses is recorded. We read in Stephen's sermon of ACTS 7 the following concerning Moses: ACTS 7:30 *And when forty years were expired, there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sina an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush.* 31 *When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him,* 32 *Saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, (entromos) and durst not behold.* 33 *Then said the Lord to him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground.* Note here that Moses trembled for fear at the presence of the Lord. We read *entromos* again in HEBREWS 12. HEBREWS 12:18 *For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,* 19 *And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:* 20 *(For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so*

*much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart: 21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:).* The word “quake” here in HEBREWS 12:21 is again our Greek word *entromos*, which here again means: “I am trembling.” So we see that Moses on at least two different occasions trembled for fear at the presence of the Lord. Our Philippian jailor in our text of ACTS 16:29 was doing the very same thing that Moses did, trembling for fear at the presence of the Lord, which was made manifest to him by the earthquake in combination of the words, and deeds of the Apostles Paul and Silas, whom he now knew to be servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation, the very words that caused Paul and Silas to be put in prison in the first place!

Next in ACTS 16:29 after springing into their cell we read that the jailor ...*fell down before Paul and Silas*. In this scene we find the jailor falling down before the very feet of the Apostles, whom he had made fast in the stocks earlier. And why did the jailor fall down before Paul and Silas? For one thing the jailor was certainly grateful that Paul had prevented him from taking his own life moments before when ...*Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here...* ACTS 16:28. Another reason the jailor fell down before Paul and Silas was to show them now a token of civil respect, as was the custom of the eastern people of Paul’s day.

Remember as we read all of this that all of this took place while it was still **midnight**! And in our scriptural text of ACTS 16 we are in mid sentence of verses 29 & 30, so let’s read further: ACTS 16:29 *Then he (the jailor) 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?* After falling down before Paul and Silas, the jailor then “brought them out,” meaning brought them out of the inner prison, the dungeon in which they were confined, to a more open part of the prison. So Paul and Silas were still at the prison in probably better hearing range of all the prisoners when the still trembling jailor asks Paul and Silas: *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* Why did the jailor ask: *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*

Before we read the answer to this most important question make a note that there are fifty-five “**be saved**” statements found in scripture! For example, Jesus told Nicodemus in JOHN 3:17 *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved*. In JOHN 10 Jesus gave the discourse on the Good Shepherd, and He said in JOHN 10:9 *I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture*. In Peter’s first sermon preached before the multitude on the day of Pentecost in ACTS 2, Peter quoted from JOEL 2, and said in ACTS 2:21 *And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved*.

Back to our text in ACTS 16:30, why did the jailor ask: *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* The jailor recognized who was in charge here, and it wasn’t him. We mentioned earlier that the Lord had indeed put Paul in charge of the prison this **midnight**, and had also assured Paul that all of the prisoners were present, and accounted for. The jailor realized at this dark **midnight** hour a Superior presence manifested in these two Apostles had just prevented him from taking his own life! The startling earthquake, and the inward conflict that the jailor was going through, (supposing that his prisoners had escaped perceiving they were all now set free), and himself being arrested from taking his own life by the cry of the Apostle Paul to “do thyself no harm, for we are all here,” had left the jailor trembling, and shaking. He truly now realized that these two Apostles, which he had so poorly treated, were indeed servants of the most high God, who also could tell him the way of salvation, for this was really all he knew of his prisoners, Paul and Silas. Their testimony went before them, and now at this momentous **midnight** hour, with all of these thoughts, and emotions of the jailor coming to a peak, the jailor cries out: *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* You could have probably heard a pin drop as the jailor, and all the other prisoners waited for Paul and Silas’ response. Never was a more important question asked. And note the jailors question was personal: *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*... not “what must we do to be saved? Paul and Silas immediately knew the answer to this question, do you? In todays world many who wish to know the answer to a question ask their smart phone, or computer. Ask Google “what must I do to be saved,” and you will get about 484 million



different results, and many of these responses give the correct answer. Paul and Silas immediately answered the Philippian jailors question with these words in ACTS 16:31 *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* Google also has links to about 14.5 million sermons on these two verses. So there is no telling as to how many sermons have been preached over the centuries since ACTS 16:30 & 31 was put into print. Nor is there any way of knowing how many souls were snatched from the bonds of the prison of hell because of the Philippian jailors question, and Paul and Silas' answer.

Here's a correlated thought. The phrase "**believe on**" is found in fourteen verses of scripture. Fourteen just happens to be the number that is associated with DELIVERANCE or SALVATION! All fourteen of these verses underscore His DELIVERANCE, and/or His SALVATION! Again our text in ACTS 16:31 reads: *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* We won't look at all fourteen verses where we find the phrase "**believe on**," but the following verses will get you started. JOHN 1:12 speaking of the True Light, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ reads: *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.* In JOHN 7 we will read three verses. JOHN 7:37 *In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.* 38 *He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.* 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.)* (Note for now in JOHN 7:38 the phrase "**believeth on**," a similar phrase to "**believe on**," and we will note it's significance after completing our "**believe on**" discussion.) In JOHN 9 Jesus heals a blind man who had lived his whole life in darkness until Jesus healed him. Please read the whole chapter, but we will start in 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?* 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.* 38 *And he said, Lord, I believe. And he worshipped him.* Next we will go to ACTS 19 where Paul found some disciples at Ephesus. 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.* Later in life, in ROMANS 4 Paul is referencing Abraham when he writes: ROMANS 4:20 *He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;* 21 *And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.* 22 *And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.* 23 *Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;* 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;* 25 *Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.* We have already quoted this next "**believe on**" scripture several times in this study as it was written unto the Philippian Saints who Paul first witnessed to in ACTS 16. 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.* Unto Timothy Paul writes in: 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.* One more from the Apostle John written in 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.* Note in this verse of 1 JOHN 5:13 that we find the phrase "**believe on**" twice, so in reality the phrase "**believe on**" is found fifteen times in fourteen verses. We just looked at eleven of these fourteen verses pointing to DELIVERANCE and/or SALVATION! You can look up the three we left out on your own: JOHN 11:14; JOHN 17:20; and 1 JOHN 3:23.

As we just learned, we find the phrase "**believe on**" fifteen times in scripture. We also find the phrase "**believeth on**" fifteen times in scripture, and recall that fifteen is the number pointing to REST. Jesus Christ Himself said this about REST in MATTHEW 11. MATTHEW 11:28 *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. 30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. In our **midnight** Bible story Paul and Silas were telling the Philippian jailor that he could rest in this: ...**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house...** ACTS 16:31.

Let's now look at some of fifteen "**believeth on**" phrases found in scripture starting with what Jesus Himself stated in JOHN 5:24 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and **believeth on him** that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life.* We again read Jesus' words in JOHN 6. JOHN 6:35 *And Jesus said unto them, I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that **believeth on me** shall never thirst.* JOHN 6:40 *And this is the will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son, and **believeth on him**, may have everlasting life: and I will raise him up at the last day.* JOHN 6:47 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that **believeth on me** hath everlasting life.* We find ten of the fifteen "**believeth on**" phrases found in scripture in the gospel of JOHN, and all are quotes from Jesus. We have now looked at five of these ten "**believeth on**" quotes from Jesus in JOHN, counting JOHN 7:38 mentioned previously. Here are three more of Jesus' "**believeth on**" quotes from JOHN. JOHN 12:44 *Jesus cried and said, He that **believeth on me**, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.* JOHN 12:46 *I am come a light into the world, that whosoever **believeth on me** should not abide in darkness.* JOHN 14:12 *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that **believeth on me**, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.*

In JOHN 14:12 Jesus is beginning to tell His disciples at the last supper about the importance of receiving the Holy Ghost when Jesus sends Him on the day of Pentecost a few short weeks later. So Jesus explains to His disciples ...*He that **believeth on me**, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father.* The "greater works" Jesus tells about here is confusing because the word "works" here was put in by the translators, and was not found in the original. The meaning of "greater works" is: grander in scope, simply because the number of Holy Ghost filled believers will be multiplied. This meant that the results of Jesus works would be multiplied, with the results of God's work being far more extensive, which has been the case ever since the day of Pentecost. To explain this further Jesus added in JOHN 14:13 & 14 -- *And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.* So we find that Jesus was telling all ...*that **believeth on me**, the works that I do shall he do also... because I go unto my Father.* And all ...*that **believeth on me**... greater works than these shall he do... because ...whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.* Furthermore ...*If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it... that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*

There are five more "**believeth on**" phrases found in scripture after the gospel of JOHN, and they are found in ROMANS 4:5; ROMANS 9:33; ROMANS 10:11; 1 PETER 2:6; and 1 JOHN 5:10.

We are still not finished examining the correlated scriptures that our **midnight** Bible story text of ACTS 16:30 & 31 has brought us to. The Philippian jailor at this **midnight** hour has asked Paul and Silas this most important question in ACTS 16:30 ...*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.*** We made mention that there are fifteen "**believe on**" phrases, and fifteen "**believeth on**" statements found in scripture, and we have already looked at, or referenced most of these scriptures. One more scripture that we haven't yet looked is a statement of John the Baptist's found in JOHN 3:36. JOHN 3:36 *He that **believeth on the Son** hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

After examining the majority of the "**believe on**," and "**believeth on**" scriptures, let's next take note of the of the "**believeth in**," and "**believe in**" verses of scripture, because all four of these statements are interwoven together in the principles they present concerning salvation, and beyond. Since we last referenced a verse in JOHN 3, let's look at some of what Jesus told Nicodemus in JOHN 3. In JOHN 3:7 Jesus explained to Nicodemus that ...*Ye must be born again.* Jesus further

expounds upon this theme unto Nicodemus, and says to him starting in JOHN 3:14 *And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: 15 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. 17 For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. 18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.* In this portion we just read two of six “**believeth in**” verses of scripture, and one more “**believeth on**” verse. Two more “**believeth in**” verses of scripture are found in JOHN 11 as Jesus talks to Lazarus’ sister Martha before He raised Lazarus from the dead. JOHN 11:20 *Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met him: but Mary sat still in the house. 21 Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died. 22 But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee. 23 Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again. 24 Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day. 25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: 26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? 27 She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.* One more “**believeth in**” verse is found in Peter’s sermon at the house of Cornelius in ACTS 10:43 where speaking of Jesus of Nazareth Peter says: *To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.* You can look up ROMANS 3:26 for the last of the six “**believeth in**” verses of scripture.

Finally make a note that there are twelve “**believe in**” scriptures, but we will look at only three of them. Jesus said in JOHN 12:36 *While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light. These things spake Jesus, and departed, and did hide himself from them.* During the last supper Jesus told His disciples in JOHN 14:1 *Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.* Next let’s go to ROMANS 10. 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. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. 11 For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. 12 For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. 13 For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

Back in our **midnight** Bible story, in a most desperate situation, at a dark **midnight** hour the Philippian jailor has asked Paul and Silas in ACTS 16:30 *...Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* And Paul and Silas answered in verse 31 *...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* Our **midnight** Bible story continues in ACTS 16:32. ACTS 16:32 *And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. 33 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.* There is only one “**believing in**” phrase in all of scripture, and it is right here in ACTS 16:34.

Note all of what we just read from ACTS 16:25 through ACTS 16:34 happened at **midnight**, that is at the **midnight** hours before daylight. Let’s examine verses 32 through 34 a little closer. ACTS 16:32 tells that Paul and Silas *...spake unto him (the jailor) the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.* Paul and Silas were expounding unto the jailor, and to all that were in his house what it meant to believe on the Lord Jesus, and what it meant to be saved, which facts we just examined in the scriptures we looked at above. The phrase in verse 32 “the word of the Lord” is found in 255 verses of scripture. “The word of the Lord” that Paul preached is summed up in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3 & 4, which reads: *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures.* Paul also wrote this familiar portion of scripture in ROMANS 10, which we also just looked at above. ROMANS 10:8 *...The word is nigh*

*thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; 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. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* No doubt the Apostles Paul and Silas also presented this very thought unto the Philippian jailor, and all in his house that now famous **midnight!** It also seems that the other prisoners heard, and listened attentively unto the words of Paul and Silas as they spoke unto the jailor, and those of his household.

Next we read in Acts 16:33 that the grateful jailor, who still retained the custody of Paul and Silas, *...took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes.* We do not have a photograph of this scene, only a word picture. Some commentators paint the picture that the jailors house, and the prison shared the same roof. Perhaps this was true. No doubt both facilities were close together. Obviously there was some means of water available; whether it was a well, or a fountain, or a spring, or a creek, or a tank, or pond we are not told. What we are told is that the jailor now had compassion on Paul and Silas, and washed their many stripes.

The last part of ACTS 16:33 informs us that the jailor then *...was baptized, he and all his, straightway.* When the jailor asked Paul and Silas in in ACTS 16:30 *...Sirs, what must I do to be saved?...* what was Paul and Silas' answer? ACTS 16:31 *And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* Notice that they didn't say "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be baptized, and thou shalt be saved." Neither did they say "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and be baptized, and do a bunch of other stuff, and thou shalt be saved." The answer to *...Sirs, what must I do to be saved?...* was as short, and as simple as it is: *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* That's it.

To underscore this point that all there is to being saved is to *...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved...* let's look at a few verses found in LUKE 23. In LUKE 23 we find one of the four gospel records of Jesus crucifixion. With Jesus there were *...two other, malefactors, led with Him to be put to death...* LUKE 23:32. A few verses later we read, starting in LUKE 23:39 *And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. 40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? 41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. 42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. 43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.* This repentant thief had acknowledged Jesus as his Lord and Saviour, and had the faith to believe that God would indeed raise Jesus from the dead, and with this confession this thief was saved. *And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise...* LUKE 23:43. This repentant thief didn't have time to be baptized did he? But he **believed** that Jesus was his Lord, and Saviour! We find the word "**believed**" 116 times in scripture. The very first time we find the word "**believed**" is in GENESIS 15:6 where the Lord give Abraham the Abrahamic Covenant. We read in GENESIS 15:6 that Abram *...believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.* In ROMANS 4:3 Paul quotes GENESIS 15:6, writing: *For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.* Later in GALATIANS 3:6 Paul again references GENESIS 15:6, writing: *Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.* The repentant thief in LUKE 23 also *...believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness...* GENESIS 15:6.

So why then do we read in ACTS 16:33 that the jailor *...was baptized, he and all his, straightway...* ? Realize now that when the jailor, and all his of his household were baptized that **midnight**, that they all had just confessed Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour having now believed that God hath raised Jesus from the dead. 1 JOHN 1:9 further tells us: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* The jailor, and those who believed of his household were now indeed saved. Paul and Silas then baptized the jailor, and all his, straightway after explaining to them the principles taught in the following two portions of scripture. Paul wrote in ROMANS 6:3 & 4 -- *Know ye not, that so many of us as were*

*baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.* Again in COLOSSIANS 2:12 Paul writes: *Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.* Brother Copley helped explain this in his excellent tract on Water Baptism, which all who read this should review. Brother Copley wrote: "In ROMANS six, which delineates the foundation for our complete victory over all sin, our death, burial, and resurrection with Christ are symbolized by baptism. By the act of going down into the water, we say that Christ died for us and that we died with Him and that He was buried and we were buried with Him. We say, "Our old man was crucified with Christ, and buried with Him in Joseph's tomb." We say that "...old things are passed away..." 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17. We say by baptism, that we died with Christ to the world and to sin and to the law- to the world from which we are forever separated, to sin whose power is forever broken, and to the law from whose dominion we are forever free. Hallelujah! To believe this fills one with "Hallelujahs!" We say that "...henceforth know we no man after the flesh..." or the old creation -- 2 CORINTHIANS 5:16. Then, by our coming forth from the watery grave, we declare that Christ is risen - that God "...raised Him from the dead..." {ACTS 13:30; ROMANS 10:9; GALATIANS 1:1; EPHESIANS 1:20; and COLOSSIANS 2:12}, and "...hath raised us up together..." with Him -- EPHESIANS 2:6. We thereby proclaim that we are a new creation, a heavenly people, a spiritual race, a special treasure. We announce that we are alive in Christ forevermore, to "...walk in newness of life..." in the power of the Holy Spirit -- ROMANS 6:4. By our personal baptism in water we outwardly, publicly, and boldly declare to men and demons that God is true in all He says about the old creation and all He says to the new creation. Baptism on our side is a solemn sign, and on God's side it is a sacred seal that we are no more of this world, but that we belong wholly, and forever to "*Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father...*" -- REVELATION 1:5 & 6. As the Lord took care of His dear Son - guiding and guarding Him, and finally taking Him to Himself - so does He vouchsafe (grant) to do with all His dear sons. Hence, Peter triumphantly declares, that we "...are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time..." -- 1 PETER 1:5. Then, having been baptized in water, the Holy Spirit says that "...ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you..." -- ROMANS 6:17. Our death and burial and resurrection with Christ is the doctrine itself -- the vital teaching; but the water baptism is the form of doctrine -- the outward, visible form - of what we inwardly believe and receive." {End of quoting Brother Copley.} To summarize then, water baptism is an outward expression of an inward belief that one has accepted Jesus Christ as their own personal Saviour; His forgiveness of their sins, and that God has indeed raised Him from the dead, and that they truly believe in the resurrected Jesus Christ, Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him! {Study 1 PETER 3:18-22.}

Returning to our **midnight** Bible story in ACTS 16, realize that it was still the same hour of the **midnight** when we read in ACTS 16:33 this concerning 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.* Realize here that Paul and Silas were still in the custody of the Philippian jailor, thus they were still his prisoner. Actually the Philippian jailor didn't have the authority to release Paul, and Silas, but God did, and as we noted in ACTS 16:26, the Lord had loosed all of the prisoners bands, and opened all the prison doors, thus setting all of them free. Just the hour before 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. The Philippian jailor had also faced his darkest **midnight** crisis too, supposing all of the prisoners had escaped after the **midnight** earthquake, which had also awakened all those of Philippi! But our gracious Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ had also delivered the Philippian jailor from his **midnight** crisis also! And this **midnight** turned out to be the best day of the Philippian jailors life, so far. For the first time he had heard the

good news of Paul's gospel message, and he and his house had all got saved! None of them wanted this **midnight** to end, so we find in ACTS 16:34 that the Philippian jailor took Paul and Silas, and *...brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.* All involved here could now *...Rejoice evermore...* as 1 THESSALONIANS 5:16 tells us to do. All here that **midnight** were grateful unto God! In simple gratitude the jailor had 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. Paul and Silas felt nearly as good themselves. The prisoners, Paul and Silas, couldn't have been treated better if they were staying in a five star hotel! Neither could the Philippian jailor, for now he was treated with more of the good old gospel message preached from the mouth of the Apostle Paul himself. Thus the Philippian jailor and his household become a foundational 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 **midnight** on the solid foundation of Jesus Christ. Also that **midnight** the town of Philippi got a new jailor, for again 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17, which we also read earlier 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.* The dark hours of this now famous **midnight** concluded with the Philippian jailor *...believing in God with all his house...* ACTS 16:34.

In this **midnight** Bible story we have found in ACTS 16:12-34 the foundation that Paul laid at Philippi, noting that the foundation is Jesus Christ! There were two households whose heart the Lord opened there in Philippi; Lydia's in verses 14 & 15, and the Philippian jailors in verses 30-34. That's it. In both instances it was the word of the Lord that was latched onto by these two families of different backgrounds. And this was how the church at Philippi was established. Note again what was said of the Philippian jailor in ACTS 16:34 *And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.* There are really four deeper points of interest found in this verse, each separated by a comma. First after hearing, and believing, and receiving the word of the Lord as spoken by both Paul and Silas, the jailor, and his whole household believed, and were baptized that very **midnight** as was told in ACTS 16:32 & 33. We next read in verse 34 that the jailor *...brought them into his house...* . Think about this for a moment, the Philippian jailor brought two convicts into his own house. What was he thinking? Can you imagine the trouble such actions would bring a jailor today? But God had a much deeper plan here, and a purpose that went beyond all of their life times. And the Philippian jailor never had any reservations about bringing Paul and Silas into his house. Meanwhile what about the other prisoners who were still under the custody of the Philippian jailor, where were they, and were they too brought into the jailors house? We are not told one way or the other are we? We are told in ACTS 16:25 that the prisoners heard Paul and Silas as they prayed, and sang praises unto God at **midnight**. We are further told in verse 28 that the Apostle Paul knew that all of the prisoners were still present after the **midnight** earthquake. We must note also that the other prisoners no doubt heard the jailor cry out in verse 30...*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* Certainly the other prisoners also heard Paul and Silas as they answered in verse 31 *...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* Was the whole prison saved that **midnight**? That is a real possibility, but we will have to wait until we get to heaven to find the answer to these questions.

ACTS 16:34 *And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house.* The second point of interest in verse 34 revolves around this statement: *...he set meat before them...* . This simply means that the jailor placed upon the table of his house food for the hungry Apostles to eat. Now think about this for a moment; this kind of hospitality was given in appreciation for what had just taken place this **midnight**. The jailors whole household had just got saved, and perhaps so had the other prisoners as we indicated earlier!



The jailors table now becomes the focal point of our **midnight** Bible story. May I point you to the fifth verse of the 23<sup>rd</sup> PSALM for a moment, and quote a little from Brother Hill's book "The Shepherds Psalm." PSALMS 23:5 reads: *Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.* In our **midnight** Bible story of ACTS 16:34 there was a table prepared for Paul and Silas by the Philippian jailor. Even though the two tables reflect different circumstance, the purposes of both tables are similar. Here is a little of what Brother Hill wrote about this table. "God furnishes a table that sustains people forever. It holds the richest, the best, the greatest and the most satisfying food there is - there are not words to tell the meaning of this table. Some Christians search for excitement everywhere but this table. Here is a feast that is personally prepared by God who loves us like we could never imagine. He is the chef of all chefs - the one who put the honey in the honeysuckle for the hummingbird. He is the one who prepared the moss-covered cups in the beautiful cool stream to slake the thirst of the panting stag. And He is the one who has prepared for our souls the very sweetest meal that there can ever be. There is nothing that can keep us from enjoying the fatness of this table except our unbelief. There are no requirements for coming to this table - it is for whosoever will. Most of the 'brilliant' minds in this world know nothing about this table because this knowledge comes by revelation, not by education." {End of quoting Brother Hill for a moment.} The jailors' **midnight** table in ACTS 16:34 was prepared for Paul and Silas by the Philippian jailor not only to provide them substance, but for the purpose of Godly fellowship. What do you think was said that **midnight** at the jailors table? Life sustaining spiritual food of Paul's gospel message was feasted upon that **midnight**. It was the words of the Apostle Paul that the jailor, and his family feasted upon. It was Paul's gospel that was introduced that now famous **midnight**, and that is how the Philippian assembly began. Let me reference a couple more quotes from Brother Hill's book "The Shepherds Psalm" that emphasize the importance of God's table.

"If we are not tried we will not go to the table. Our trials are necessary and when temptation overtakes us, we can know the meaning of the table; for if the devil is there, the great Chief Shepherd of the desert is there also. When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard before him. When Israel was out in the waste-howling wilderness, it was the Shepherd who took care of them. It was necessary for Israel to go through the wilderness to come into possession of the land of Canaan, and we too will find that the things God takes us through are absolutely necessary for our lives if we are to have the best He has for us."

"Mephibosheth's crippled condition was hidden when he sat at David's table and ate. Our imperfections are hidden as well, as we feast at the table of God. God is love and He sees us as perfect under the blood of His son. Paul said, "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. 8:32) It is God's good pleasure to give us the kingdom. If we have children we want them to succeed, but how much more, God wants His children to succeed. When God gave His son, He gave us everything He had to give - Jesus in the manger, Jesus on the cross, Jesus in the grave and Jesus resurrected. All of this is sufficient proof that He is for us, and if He be for us, who can be against us? (Rom. 8:31) God is able to make all grace abound toward us and to supply our every need as He lives within us. Paul said, "..... Nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." (Gal. 2:20) That is the sufficiency. Our lives can be filled with far more than we desire for ourselves. God never intended for any of His children to have second best - He wants every one of us to have the best. "

"The value of this table must not be measured by its material and temporal abundance, but by its spiritual abundance. Some sit at a rich table but they are spiritually starving to death. Some are poor in this world yet rich in faith, and they are growing up in Christ like stall-fed calves. "Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies. Thou anointest my head with oil. My cup runneth over." The only prerequisite for coming to the table of God is that we must have a need. It makes no difference who we are because in God's eyes one soul is potentially as valuable as another. His workings in lives may be different but the quality of each life can be equally rich. God will provide exactly what we need in our lives as we live by faith. It is our nature to enjoy dining in

beautiful and elegant surroundings, but God serves this meal in the presence of our enemies. This is so we will learn to trust Him. We may look at this table and dread what we see and draw back from it, but the distasteful thing that He has placed on the table before us is something that is given in love. The enemy can be so close, yet the Lord is our shield. He is with us from the moment we give our hearts to Him and will never leave us or forsake us. We may fail Him but He will never fail us. From the day we took Christ as our personal Saviour throughout the history of our Christian experience, to suggest that God should love us as much as He does and yet deny us anything for our good, is utterly impossible. And to suppose that Christ would have suffered for us as He did, yet deny the needful grace and strength to bear life's burdens, is to swear that He died in vain. That is the table in the presence of our enemies. Are we going to eat or are we going to starve? Are we going to say God isn't good to us or are we going to accept His generous love and grace?" {End of quoting Brother Hill.}

In our text of ACTS 16:34 *And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house...* we have discussed the first two of four points of interest in this verse. The rich fellowship that our two Apostles Paul, and Silas brought into the house of the Philippian jailor that **midnight** caused all in the house to rejoice. This is our third point of interest in this verse on how they **rejoiced**! The word "**rejoiced**" here is agalliao {ag-al-lee-ah'-o}, number 21 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, and it means: to **rejoice** greatly; to **rejoice** with exceeding joy; to be exceedingly glad!!! It's the same word found in REVELATION 19:7, which we are most familiar with: *Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.* Now try to define that exuberant **rejoicing**!! You can't really put it in words, nor could the Philippian jailor, and his household as they for the very first time heard the words of everlasting life! And they **rejoiced** because they were exceedingly glad.

Let's connect some more dots. What book of the Bible is called the joy book of the Bible? The answer is PHILIPPIANS. The word "rejoice," or "joy" is found eighteen times in PHILIPPIANS. Brother Hill taught us that in PHILIPPIANS there are no doctrines to expound, nor are there any errors to refute. The rejoicing highlighted in PHILIPPIANS revolves around rejoicing in Christ Jesus. Brother Hill noted that Job spoke of God 54 times in the 42 chapters of JOB, and in those same 42 chapters Job referenced himself over 700 times! Paul in PHILIPPIANS references Jesus 70 times in 4 chapters! PHILIPPIANS is full of high watermark scriptures. For example PHILIPPIANS 3:14 *I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* The phrase "in Christ" is found seven times in PHILIPPIANS. One of the things Paul always remembered was his first days in Philippi, and they were memorable, as we have learned from our studies in ACTS 16. Note once again what Paul wrote in PHILIPPIANS 1:3 *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, 5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; 6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.* Simple stated, the rejoicing that began during a **midnight** setting in ACTS 16 continued way beyond this time frame. And the Apostle Paul reminded these Philippian Saints of this very thing in PHILIPPIANS 4:4 with a double shot of rejoicing: *Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.* If you stop and really think about it, back in ACTS 16:25 it was the Apostles Paul and Silas praying, and singing rejoicing praises unto God at **midnight** that got everyone's attention down at the prison in Philippi in the first place. And now we find in ACTS 16:34 the Philippian jailor, and his household also entering in to the rejoicing in the Lord as they now this **midnight** felt for the first time the joy of the Lord themselves! There was no way any of them were going to get any more sleep that night, nor did they want too!

The fourth point of interest found in ACTS 16:34 *And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house...* causes us to focus upon the focal point of their rejoicing. The jailor and all of his household rejoiced because they had believed in God, and believed in God's only begotten Son Jesus Christ, who had died for their sins,

and was risen again, and is sat down at the right hand of God ever making intercession for them, and us too!!! When the jailor asked in ACTS 16:30 *...Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* Paul and Silas' answer was immediate, and without hesitation *...And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house...* ACTS 16:31. Please note here that Paul and Silas didn't say "Believe in God." There are a lot of people who claim they believe in God, but how many who say this also confess Jesus Christ to be their Saviour? In JOHN 14:1 Jesus told his disciples, whom he had been with constantly for three plus years, and instructing them daily; Jesus said unto them at that last supper *"...ye believe in God, believe also in me."* Think again about those twenty-five words you have all memorized in JOHN 3:16; what does it say? Does JOHN 3:16 say: "Believe in God?" JOHN 3:16 actually answers what it really means to "Believe in God." The twenty-five words of JOHN 3:16 states: *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.* The next verse explains further what it means to *...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ...* . JOHN 3:17 *For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.* The significance of mentioning that there are twenty-five words in JOHN 3:16 is to once again point out that twenty-five is the number pointing to THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. JOHN 3:16 is about THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS. JOHN 3:16 also answers the Philippian jailors question of ACTS 16:30 *...Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* Again Paul and Silas answered his question in ACTS 16:31 by stating: *...Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.* ACTS 16:32 continues: *And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.* And the jailor, and his entire household believed, and were baptized that very **midnight**. The Apostles Paul and Silas had the faith to believe that the jailor, and all his house would be saved that **midnight**, and they were. What an eternally profitable **midnight** that was, and this fact truly filled all present in the jailors house that **midnight** with joy unspeakable, and full of glory because of the precious love of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who was now the center point of their lives! On top of that imagine what a comfort it was for each of them in the jailors family to know their brothers, and sisters, and mom, and dad were born again. And the scripture here in ACTS 16:34 leaves us with this **midnight** scene, that they all were rejoicing, and believing in God! Note that the end result was that they all truly believed in God because they believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and had now experienced and felt His inexpressible Divine agape Love.

We are going to finish this **midnight** Bible story of ACTS 16 by examining the correlated thoughts expressed in ACTS 16:35-40. One of the things that we will find in ACTS 16:40 is that Paul and Silas *...went out of the prison...* having been released after daylight. So without telling us exactly when, sometime before morning the jailor once again returned Paul and Silas back into the prison after entertaining them at his house during the **midnight** hours of ACTS 16:34. And it was only proper that the Philippian jailor put Paul and Silas back into the prison, since he did not have the authority to release them anyway. The magistrates were the ones who commanded the jailor to keep Paul and Silas safely in ACTS 16:23, and it would be the magistrates that would command their release. But it was still the Lord who was in charge here, and furthermore it was the Lord, who in this **midnight** Bible story had handed the keys to the city of Philippi over to the Apostle Paul! Paul's instructions from the Lord that he was given years earlier on the road to Damascus is found in ACTS 26:16-18. In ACTS 26:18 the Lord told Paul that he was being sent unto the Gentiles: *To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.* Realize that all of this happened this **midnight** at the Philippian prison, and the jailors house. And during the rest of Paul's life he would spend much more time in prisons, and would turn untold many more to Jesus Christ, and His deliverance, and salvation, thus adding many more souls to the kingdom of God. Many of these converted were fellow prisoners. Stated another way, God's business is not stopped by prison bars, and prison walls, or the darkness of **midnight**, or Philippian magistrates!

If we left this **midnight** Bible story before finishing all of the verses of ACTS 16 we would short change ourselves in fully appreciating the results of the Lord's foundational work here at Philippi. There was some more wonderful working of the Holy Ghost revealed in the closing verses of ACTS 16. And as we go through these closing verses of ACTS 16 realize that the majority of ACTS 16 tells the story of how the church at Philippi was founded. It was in the believing hearts of a few common folk where Paul's gospel message was first planted in Philippi, and as we learned as we studied this chapter, there were two main families whose heart the Lord opened; the family of Lydia, and the household of the Philippian jailor. It was from these two very different families that the church at Philippi grew in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. And Lord willing we will cover the answer to the question I am about to ask later in this part of our study, but who taught Lydia's household, and the Philippian jailor's family after Paul and Silas and Timothy departed in verse 40 of ACTS 16? The answer to this question will begin to manifest itself as we continue examining the results of this **midnight** Bible story.

Before we study ACTS 16:35-40 take a moment to appreciate the high spiritual atmosphere that was present at the Philippian jail as a new day begin to dawn. Not only were Paul and Silas still rejoicing, but so were the Philippian jailor, and his family. Certainly they had their very first prayer meeting together before dawn, where requests were made unto the Lord for everyone here's immediate future. Perhaps our Apostle Paul closed out the **midnight** hours with a prayer similar to the one found in EPHESIANS 1. *EPHESIANS 1:17 That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, 21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.* Of course we are not told anything about this kind of prayer in ACTS 16 being prayed at the jailors house, but we must realize that such a prayer requesting further spiritual wisdom and revelation of the Lord Jesus Christ be revealed unto these new born Saints, and that they would have the eyes of their understanding enlightened, and learn about the hope of His calling, and the glory of his inheritance in the Saints, and the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward who believe. Such spiritual growth could only be achieved by the help, and power of the Holy Ghost. It would be hard to imagine that Paul and Silas did not lay hands upon, and pray for these new born again believers to receive the Holy Ghost since they had now believed. Perhaps that was part of their rejoicing that we read about in ACTS 16:34.

Let's consider for a moment this thought of laying hands upon someone for the purpose of receiving the Holy Ghost. Is it necessary for someone to lay hands upon a believer for the purpose of receiving the Holy Ghost? The answer to this question is no, however there are several examples found in New Testament scripture where believers received the Holy Ghost immediately after someone filled with the Holy Ghost laid their hands on them, and prayed that they too would receive the Holy Ghost. Our Apostle Paul received the Holy Ghost after Ananias of Damascus laid his hands upon him in ACTS 9. Let's just read the whole account starting in ACTS 9:10. As we read this recall that our Apostle Paul was still then known as Saul of Tarsus, who had just got saved on the road to Damascus. *ACTS 9:10 And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I am here, Lord. 11 And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and enquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, 12 And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting his hand on him, that he might receive his sight.* Let's pause here for a moment and ask the question: what kind of sight did the Lord send Ananias of Damascus to Saul of Tarsus to pray for, natural sight, spiritual sight, or both? We will answer that question in a moment.

ACTS 9:13 *Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: 14 And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. 15 But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: 16 For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake. 17 And Ananias went his way, and entered into the house; and putting his hands on him said, Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, hath sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost. 18 And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales: and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was baptized.* What kind of sight did Saul of Tarsus receive here? Specifically Ananias of Damascus told Saul of Tarsus that he was putting his hands on him, and praying for him ...*that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost...* ACTS 9:17. ACTS 9:18 tells us that Saul of Tarsus immediately ...*received sight forthwith*. Was he filled with the Holy Ghost? In 1 CORINTHIANS 14:18 Paul writes to the Corinthians: *I thank my God, I speak with tongues more than ye all*. Speaking in tongues is a sign, and an evidence that one has been filled with the Holy Ghost as was the case on the day of Pentecost in ACTS 2:4. ACTS 2:4 *And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance*. When was Paul, old Saul of Tarsus, filled with the Holy Ghost? Paul was filled with the Holy Ghost in ACTS 9:18 immediately after Ananias of Damascus prayed for him to receive his sight. Saul of Tarsus immediately received his natural eyesight back after Ananias prayed for him, and part of Ananias' prayer in ACTS 9:17 was that he ...*be filled with the Holy Ghost*. So not only did Saul of Tarsus have restored his natural eyesight, but his spiritual eyes were now also very much enlightened as he also was filled with the Holy Ghost. Study these verses until you too see that this is what happened here in ACTS 9:18.

This wasn't the first time that a believer laid his hands on another believer, and prayed for them to be filled with the Holy Ghost. Back up a chapter to ACTS 8, and we will begin reading at verse 14. ACTS 8:14 *Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: 15 Who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost: 16 (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) 17 Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost.*

Next let's go to ACTS 19 and read the first six verses. ACTS 19:1 *And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, 2 He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. 3 And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. 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.* Realize in John the Baptist's day water baptism was an outward expression of an inward belief in the soon coming Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and His forgiveness of sins. In John the Baptist's day Jesus was not yet crucified, and risen from the dead, nor was the Holy Ghost yet given. Continuing on in ACTS 19:5 *When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.* Why were these disciples baptized again, this time in the name of the Lord Jesus? Because now they had just learned from the mouth of our Apostle Paul that Christ Jesus, whom John the Baptist said would come after him, had now indeed come, and died for our sins according to the scriptures, and was buried, and rose again the third day according to the scriptures. {Study again 1 CORINTHIANS 15:3 & 4.} Then in ACTS 19:6 we read: *And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.* Please read, and re-read verses 6 over, and over again until you see how these dozen disciples were filled with the Holy Ghost. They were filled with the Holy Ghost after the Apostle Paul "laid his hands upon them," and prayed they would be filled with the Holy Ghost just as had happened when Ananias of Damascus prayed for him back in ACTS 9:17.

One last example of laying hands upon someone for the purpose of receiving the Holy Ghost takes us to Paul's last epistle that he wrote, which is 2 TIMOTHY. In 2 TIMOTHY 1 Paul no doubt is making reference to the early verses of ACTS 16 when Timothy was added to Paul's ministry. Paul writes in 2 TIMOTHY 1:6 *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.* What was the "gift of God" that Paul was referring to here? It was the gift of the Holy Ghost, which is also called a gift in ACTS 2:38 and ACTS 10:45.

Back to ACTS 16:34 where at the house of the Philippian jailor Paul and Silas were fellowshiping with this man, and rejoicing with his family, all of whom had just got saved. Did Paul and Silas lay hands on these new believers praying that they receive the Holy Ghost since they had believed? Scripture doesn't answer this question one way or the other, however Paul does acknowledge in PHILIPPIANS 1:3 *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, 5 For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now; 6 Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.* The power behind ...*he which hath begun a good work in you...* would be the Holy Ghost would it not? So as we noted earlier it would be hard to imagine that Paul and Silas did not lay hands upon, and pray for these new born again believers to receive the Holy Ghost since they had now believed. Perhaps that was part of their rejoicing that we read about in ACTS 16:34.

Whatever prayers were further prayed during those **midnight** hours at the Philippian jailors house in ACTS 16 began to be answered when it was day. And one more thought before reading ACTS 16:35, and that is what do you suppose Timothy and Luke, and Lydia's household were doing after Paul and Silas were arrested the day before? Certainly they were praying too; praying for the safe keeping of Paul and Silas, and for their quick release if this was God's will. And the Lord also heard their prayers, and began to answer their requests as soon as it was day. We see their prayers answered in ACTS 16:35 *And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.*

Let's examine this verse further in some detail, because there is considerable information revealed in these few words of scripture. There is a significant amount of change in heart of the Philippian magistrates that is recorded here from the previous evening to the next morning. We are told in PROVERBS 27:1 *Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth.* We know that none of us know what a day will bring forth, but a **midnight** earthquake certainly changed the Philippian magistrates' perspective. Of course we know the truth of PROVERBS 21:1 *The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.*

God indeed had given the key to the city of Philippi to our Apostle Paul, and this key unlocked eternal treasures, which we are still learning, and benefiting from. What is the purpose of studying these **midnight** Bible stories? The reason we have so many different **midnight** Bible stories left us in scripture is to further show us that the darkest of times brings forth the full overcomers. The darkest of times brought forth the hero's of faith of the Old Testament found mentioned in HEBREWS 11, and the darkest **midnight** trials and tests will also bring forth the full overcomers found in the Bride of Christ; the New Testament Apostle Paul following hero's of faith. After several **midnight** Bible tests, such as this one we are currently studying about in ACTS 16, our Apostle Paul was able to write about the sugkleronomos {soong-klay-ron-om'-os} mystery the Holy Ghost revealed unto him. Sugkleronomos {soong-klay-ron-om'-os}, number 4789 in The Strong's Greek Concordance, is the Greek word that elevates the word "**fellowheirs**" to it's highest level. The word "**fellowheirs**" is only found one time in scripture, and that is in EPHESIANS 3:6, where we read: *That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel.* EPHESIANS 3:6 has a depth to it that incorporates the other mysteries revealed unto Paul, which very few Christians ever grasp, or ever see, mainly because the vast majority of Christian pastors and teachers don't know, and haven't been properly taught what it means to be



**fellowheirs** with Christ. The Kingdom Apostle didn't know this, or teach this because this was Paul's gospel message to teach, which is "the mystery of Christ" referenced in EPHESIANS 3:4. The Greek word *sugkleronomos* was again used of Paul in ROMANS 8:17. Let's start reading in ROMANS 8:16 so we can see the context of the usage of *sugkleronomos* in verse 17. ROMANS 8:16 *The Spirit himself (the Holy Spirit) 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.* Note the levels of Christian growth expressed in this portion of scripture, *...children of God, ...heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ.* The "**joint-heirs with Christ**" in ROMANS 8:17 is again that Greek word *sugkleronomos*, which here means: is **joint-heir**, or co-inheritor as of a wife with her husband! The word "**joint-heirs**" also is only found one time in scripture. The Bride of Christ is the ultimate **better thing** Paul spoke of in HEBREWS 11:40 *God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.* Furthermore the Bride of Christ is the ultimate joy that was set before Christ as He endured the cross, a point noted in HEBREWS 12:2. All believers won't be "**joint-heirs with Christ**" even though this provision is made for all believers during this church age. But all believers are not filled with the Holy Ghost, thus they are missing the *dunamis* {doo'-nam-is} power that is required to qualify as a *sugkleronomos* "**joint-heirs with Christ.**" Being a **joint-heir** with Christ requires the following element: suffering together with Christ. ROMANS 8:17 *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.* This is one of the main points of emphasis in these **midnight** Bible stories, that is to point out the eternal overcoming benefits of **midnight** trials and tests. Rahab would have never become one of the grandmothers of Jesus Christ had she not hid the two spies at a **midnight** hour in JOSHUA 2. Gideon would not have become a Judge over Israel for forty years without his **midnight** test, which left him also a conqueror of around a million or so Midianites! You and I will never become *sugkleronomos* "**joint-heirs with Christ**" without the benefits of **midnight** tests, and trials either! And our Apostle Paul continued to write in his one hundred chapters of scripture, lessons on what he learned through all of his **midnight** trials and tests. We find a couple more of these high water mark lessons of the full overcomer here in the remaining verses of ROMANS 8. ROMANS 8:28 *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.* We might not realize the full impact of this statement while we are in our **midnight** test, but by faith we do *...know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* One more ROMANS 8 highlight before we return to ACTS 16. ROMANS 8:35 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Our **midnight** tests, and trials prove His *sugkleronomos* "**joint-heirs with Christ**" love for us, and further show us that *...in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

ACTS 16:35 *And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.* Here in ACTS 16:35 we read first the words "when it was day," a phrase 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. GRACE then should point us to Jesus, and we cannot, 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. Paul wrote in GALATIANS 2:20 *...Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.* JOHN 1:17 further tells us this about Jesus: *...grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.* GRACE and Jesus are words that depend upon each other. GRACE cannot 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.* Paul wrote this in EPHESIANS 2:8 *For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God:...* . Again Paul wrote this about the GRACE of Jesus in TITUS 2:11 *For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men.* So we find that GRACE and Jesus are inseparable.

We just read in JOHN 1:14 *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.* And we also read with this JOHN 1:17 that *...grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.* The word “truth” is another of those five-letter words that help define Jesus, and in JOHN 14:6 we read these words spoken by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: *...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.* In the last part of EPHESIANS 4:21 Paul writes that *...the truth is in Jesus.* So the number five is the number pointing to GRACE, and GRACE defines Jesus, and so does that five-letter word “truth.” Jesus is grace and truth, and the truth is in Jesus!

We are still studying ACTS 16:35 *And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.* And we haven’t yet finished looking at the first five words of this verse: *And when it was day.* This phrase is found five times in scripture, as we noted earlier, and the number five points to GRACE. And GRACE is a five-letter word that describes, and begins to reveal Jesus unto us, who came to earth *...full of grace and truth...* which is another five-word statement that we just referenced from JOHN 1:14. Truth is another five-letter word that is used in scripture to describe Jesus as we also just read in JOHN 1:17 *...grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.* For this next five-letter word that we will look at that also correlates to Jesus let’s turn to GENESIS 1. Most Bible students can quote GENESIS 1:1. GENESIS 1:1 *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.* I found it most interesting that the phrase “**in the beginning**” is found in seventeen scriptures. Seventeen is the number that has to do with VICTORY IN CHRIST JESUS. We are not finished in GENESIS 1 yet, but let’s note three more of these “**in the beginning**” scriptures. JOHN 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* 2 *The same was in the beginning with God.* HEBREWS 1:10 *And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands.* These verses also point back to GENESIS 1:1. GENESIS 1:1 *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.* 2 *And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.* Note what was **in the beginning**; darkness. God choose a scene, and a sphere of **midnight** kind of darkness, and hopelessness to act, and reveal His person. Ponder that statement for a moment, and consider what was revealed after that **midnight** kind of darkness found in GENESIS 1:1 & 2. Is there really any words that can express what it took 66 books of the Bible to describe? The answer is both yes, and no, yet it will still take the ages to come to fully comprehend the exceeding riches of God’s kindness toward us through Christ Jesus according EPHESIANS 2:7. Let’s read a few verses from COLOSSIANS 1 that helps explain what we are about to read in GENESIS 1:3-5. COLOSSIANS 1:12 *Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins: 15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that*

*are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.* Who is Paul talking about here? Of course the answer is our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who was revealed in scripture after GENESIS 1:1 & 2. We see this also in JOHN 1 where we will continue reading from where we left off a moment ago. JOHN 1:3 *All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.* GENESIS 1:3 *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. Note here too that LIGHT is another five-letter word, like GRACE and TRUTH, which also points to Jesus. JOHN 8:12 and 9:5 both tell us that Jesus is the LIGHT of the world. The LIGHT of the world, Jesus, who is the Word of God, is the personality fully revealed, and documented in the scriptures after GENESIS 1:1 & 2. In all of our **midnight** Bible stories we find Jesus breaking the darkness of **midnight** with His LIGHT.

We all also know that the rising of the sun separates light from darkness, night from day. There is a Greek word which means the direction of the sun's rising (anatole {an-at-ol-ay'} number 395 in the Strong's Greek Concordance), and this word is translated "dayspring" in LUKE 1:78. In LUKE 1:68-79 we find Zacharias, the father of John the Baptist, under the power of the Holy Ghost giving a prophecy mainly concerning Jesus. And in LUKE 1:78 & 79 we read these words spoke of Jesus by Zacharias: *Through the tender mercy of our God; whereby the dayspring from on high hath visited us, 79 To give light to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.* Note here that the dayspring (Jesus) was sent to give LIGHT to them that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death. In other words Jesus is the Son rise. Here in LUKE 1 we see that God sent Jesus to divided the LIGHT from the darkness of this old world. The Apostle John expressed these same thoughts this way: In JOHN 1:4 the Apostle John tells us that: *In Jesus was life; and the life was the LIGHT of men.* In JOHN 1:5 we find: *And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not...* indicating to us how dark a world we live in. Then in JOHN 1:9 John writes that Jesus *...was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* One more scripture that the Apostle John later wrote also applies here: 1 JOHN 2:8 *Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.* The True LIGHT is Jesus.

Now put all of these thoughts together with what we have been reading and studying here in ACTS 16. We have found Paul and Silas during the darkest hour of the **midnight**, praying and singing praises unto God even though their circumstances didn't warrant this kind of behavior, and the other prisoners heard them rejoicing, and wondered what was going on. What was going on here was two Church Apostles being tested on their racecourse to be New Testament worthies of faith, and full overcoming joint-heirs with Christ. At the darkest **midnight** time of their trial they were rejoicing in the Lord, and the power of His might. By faith they saw His **midnight** LIGHT! God heard Paul and Silas, and set them free with the power of an earthquake. This very same earthquake awoke Philippi, and got everyone's attention including the magistrates. The jailor fearing that all of the prisoners had escaped nearly killed himself, but was stopped by the loud voice of Paul. The Philippian jailor then called for a light, and Paul and Silas led him to the true LIGHT, Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour. Truly the dayspring from on high gave LIGHT that **midnight** to the Philippian Jailor, and his house, who were before this time living in darkness. To him, and his house that **midnight**, *...old things passed away, and all things became new...* as is expressed in 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17. "And when it was day" the perspective of the rulers at Philippi had changed also. Thus we read in ACTS 16:35 *And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.*

The magistrates here at Philippi had a serious high opinion of themselves, so much so, that they themselves didn't dare go down to the prison at that time, but rather they sent the serjeants to

deliver their message. The “serjeants” were also authorities, like policemen, who received their orders from the magistrates.

This 35th verse raises some questions that cannot really be answered in this verse. Why did the magistrates, who the day before had rushed to beat Paul and Silas, all of a sudden decide to let Paul and Silas go? Did the earthquake alarm the superstitious magistrates into thinking that the gods were upset with them? Was their conscience then convicted of the wrongful treatment that they had ordered upon Paul and Silas? Did someone convince the magistrates that they were wrong? None of these questions are answered specifically for us here in scripture. However we do know that a mighty movement of the power of the Holy Ghost took place at Philippi in the preceding **midnight** hours before it was day. Souls that were lost were now saved. True LIGHT had come to many that night at Philippi, specifically to those prisoners in jail, and to those of the Philippian jailors household. And now “when it was day” we find that for reasons unknown, the Philippian magistrates had a change of heart concerning Paul and Silas. Truly the Lord has His way as we read earlier in PROVERBS 21:1 *The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.*

In ISAIAH 46:9 & 10 we read: *Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, 10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:...* . Applying this statement to Paul and Silas' situation, we can clearly see that God can, at anytime, by any means, declare the end of their imprisonment, for He knows the end from the beginning. God can harden the heart of Pharaoh so he would not let the children of Israel go, as noted in EXODUS 9:12; 10:20; 10:27; 11:10 and 14:8. Or God can soften the heart of the Philippian magistrates to let Paul and Silas go free. Experiences like this Philippian jail experience enabled the Apostle Paul to later write with confidence statements like this familiar one found in HEBREWS 13:5 & 6: *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. 6 So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*

So for reasons only known to God, and having completed the work at the prison in Philippi, we find in ACTS 16:35 that *...when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.*

Being children of God, Paul and Silas knew that they were as the apple of His eye, which David recorded in PSALMS 17. PSALMS 17 is a prayer of David, and reads: *Hear the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, that goeth not out of feigned lips. 2 Let my sentence come forth from thy presence; let thine eyes behold the things that are equal. 3 Thou hast proved mine heart; thou hast visited me in the night; thou hast tried me, and shalt find nothing; I am purposed that my mouth shall not transgress. 4 Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer. 5 Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not. 6 I have called upon thee, for thou wilt hear me, O God: incline thine ear unto me, and hear my speech. 7 Shew thy marvellous lovingkindness, O thou that savest by thy right hand them which put their trust in thee from those that rise up against them. 8 Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings.* Earlier in this **midnight** Bible story of Paul and Silas here in ACTS 16 we referenced verse 8 of PSALMS 17 where we noted that the word “apple” is found in eight scriptures, all in the Old Testament. Recall that the number eight has five different meanings; perhaps more. Eight is the number associated with NEW CREATION; NEW BIRTH; NEW BEGINNING; RESURRECTION; and BRIDE. All of these meanings express in one fashion or another important things that have to do with our Lord Jesus Christ. One of the Hebrew words translated “apple” here also has another meaning, and that is the middle of the night (that is the deepest blackness part of the night); **midnight** in other words. All believers are indeed are “the apple of His eye.” Study also PSALMS 121:3 & 4 and see that the Lord's eyes neither sleep, nor slumber, meaning twenty-four hours a day His eyes are upon His children, whom He cares for as “the apple of His eye.”

In the last part of ACTS 16:35 we find that the serjeants were given orders by the magistrates of Philippi to go down to the prison with the following instructions directed at Paul and Silas: "Let those men go." We must note that the magistrates themselves never intended to see Paul and Silas again. We can see that the Philippian magistrates, who commanded respect from all of the citizens they ruled over, didn't themselves respect anyone, much less the likes of these Jewish strangers, Paul and Silas. They were contemptuous toward Paul and Silas to say the least. But during the **midnight** hours, especially after the **midnight** earthquake got everyone's attention there at Philippi, the magistrates also had their hearts shaken by the Lord.

ACTS 16:36 *And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.* The keeper of the prison is the jailor of verse 23, who was also called the keeper of the prison in verse 27. But the keeper of the prison here in verse 36 is a different man than the verse 23 & 27 version of the Philippian jailor. Since **midnight** the keeper of the Philippian prison is a new man in Christ Jesus. We noted this before, but it is worthwhile to mention this again: 2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* Our Philippian jailor now being justified by faith, has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, as is stated in ROMANS 5:1. The treatment of Paul and Silas by the keeper of the Philippian prison has been first class since the **midnight** earthquake, and we must realize that this Philippian jailor and his family had been treated just as highly by the Apostles Paul and Silas as they revealed unto this household Jesus Christ. This new born again family has also had a few short hours of one-on-one teaching of Paul's gospel message from the mouth of the Apostle Paul himself. Imagine that for a moment, what it would have been like to have the Apostle Paul visit your home, and teach you one-on-one! Certainly the hours since **midnight** must have flown by for this family. Look for a moment at what is written in 2 CORINTHIANS 4 concerning Paul's gospel message. 2 CORINTHIANS 4:3 *But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. 5 For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake. 6 For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.* Paul's gospel message is the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, the LIGHT of the world!

So when the serjeants were sent by the Philippian magistrates to the keeper of the prison telling him to "let those men go," how do you suppose the Philippian jailor felt? We find our answer here in ACTS 16:36 with the Philippian jailors words to Paul: *...The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.* We find with these words the jailor's relief, and pleasure of mind, and joy of heart in this announcement as he also request that Paul and Silas go in peace. We must realize that this may have been the very first time that the Philippian keeper of the prison used these words "go in peace" as he released one of his prisoners. And we must also realize as the jailor said "go in peace" unto Paul and Silas, that he himself was still experiencing for the very first time the joy and peace of God that can only be found in the heart of a believer. Jesus had told His disciples in JOHN 14:27 *Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.* At the **midnight** hour this very same Philippian jailor had found this peace that only Jesus can give. We all know by now that before being saved this very same Philippian jailor had no peace in his heart, and was about to kill himself when he heard the urgent cry of the Apostle Paul to *"...Do thyself no harm..."* in ACTS 16:28. However now, as a born again believer, the Philippian jailor can with all confidence in Christ Jesus say to Paul and Silas, "go in peace," meaning: go in the peace of our mutual friend, and Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who has not only set me free, but has set you free too. As free men Paul and Silas could visit their new found Philippian friends any time that they wanted to when they would visit again Philippi. Years later the Apostle Paul would from another prison address this very same Philippian jailor, and the other Saints of Philippi, and write the following words, which would have deep meaning especially for this Philippian jailor: PHILIPPIANS 4:6 *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.*

ACTS 16:37 *But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.* Paul here in verse 37 addresses the serjeants that were sent from the Philippian magistrates, who were obviously present with the keeper of the prison when he told them to “depart, and go in peace.” Our Apostle Paul already had a history of speaking boldly under the anointing of the Holy Spirit as is noted in ACTS 9:27 & 29, and in ACTS 13:46 and ACTS 14:3. Now here in ACTS 16:37 after being once again emboldened by the mighty working of the Holy Ghost the preceding **midnight**, and realizing that God has indeed given him the keys that unlocked the doors of Philippi for the Lord, our Apostle Paul once again under the unction of the Holy Spirit tells the Philippian serjeants to go back to the magistrates, and tell them to come fetch us out of this prison themselves in person! Paul wasn’t trying to stir up any more trouble here at Philippi, but rather he was teaching those at Philippi a lesson here, and that lesson was it is the Lord who is in charge, not the magistrates. 1 CHRONICLES 29:11 tells us: *Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all.* Paul and Silas had indeed gotten the victory that **midnight** at the Philippian prison, and that victory came through our Lord Jesus Christ. Paul later wrote in 1 CORINTHIANS 15:57 *But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

We see then that our Apostle Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Ghost ...*said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.* Paul was doing this as a demonstration of at least two things. First Paul wanted to show the magistrates the love of God, and he could only do this in person. Think about it for a moment; do you really think that Paul, and Silas ever wanted to see these magistrates again? Probably not, but the events of the previous **midnight** had gotten them the victory over these magistrates as we noted above. Paul and Silas would show these sinful magistrates grace, and forgiveness as they also announced that they were also Roman citizens, a point we will further address momentarily. Secondly Paul and Silas called for the magistrates of Philippi to come “fetch us out” because they were also standing up for the rights of all Christians. Paul and Silas didn’t want these new born again believers to be persecuted, and treated like they had been treated. Of course we know such assaults of Christians continued, and still do to this day in certain parts of the world, but Paul put the Philippian magistrates on notice that this kind of treatment of Christians was not proper either.

Realize something else here as we examine another point found in ACTS 16:37, and that is as an Apostle of the Gentiles, Paul was also a teacher, and truly a master teacher getting his guidance from the Holy Ghost. And the Holy Ghost had here taught our Apostle Paul a lesson that stuck with him the rest of his life, and then Paul was able to pass these lessons on to us. Probably one of the biggest lessons Paul learned here at Philippi was his rights as a Roman citizen. Had he expressed these rights the afternoon before, both Paul and Silas would have been spared their beating. But then on the other hand we wouldn’t have the **midnight** story of the Philippian jailor, and his household getting saved either. So we see a lot of different lessons were learned here by our Apostle Paul; lessons that he passed on to us, and lessons that spared him from future beatings. Here in ACTS 16:37 ...*Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans,*... and we have talked a little about this before. Roman citizens had certain privileges that non-citizens didn’t have. These privileges included (1) exemption from scourging, (2) freedom from arrest (except in extreme cases), and (3) the right to appeal from the magistrate all the way up to the Emperor. Thus we find Paul and Silas were unjustly arrested accorded to Roman law, and scourged, whipped, and beaten with rods contrary to Roman law. Since it was illegal to torture a Roman citizen, and a heinous crime to bind a Roman citizen, the Roman magistrates of Philippi were in violation of the



laws of the Empire! The penalty for those who violated the law of the Roman Empire was death, and the confiscation of their property! All Paul and Silas now needed was a good lawyer, and these magistrates could be put to death! Paul and Silas already knew they had a good lawyer, and advocate, who is Jesus Christ, who is currently sitting at the right hand of God the Father ever making intercession for us. This fact is recorded in ROMANS 8:34. Let's read the whole context of this thought starting in ROMANS 8:31 *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? 33 Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. 34 Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.* So we see that we another lesson that Paul already knew, and passed on to these Philippian Saints is one he later wrote to them in PHILIPPIAN 4:6 *Be careful (anxious) for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.*

Paul and Silas didn't have any intention of having the Philippian magistrates put to death, but Paul did want to speak to them face-to-face partly because of what Ananias of Damascus was told by the Lord in ACTS 9:15, and this fact was then told to our Apostle Paul. The Lord told Ananias of Damascus in ACTS 9:15 that Paul *...is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings...* and even though the Philippian magistrates were not kings, they were the authorities of Philippi unto whom Paul was also sent as an ambassador for Christ. And obviously Paul was not to be intimidated by the Roman authorities as he learned from Ananias of Damascus. Later in life Paul would present his case, and be a witness, and a testimony of Jesus Christ before governors Felix, and Festus, and then King Agrippa, and finally Caesar himself. In the meanwhile Paul was a minister and a witness to all he came in contact with along his God give racecourse. From his Roman prison quarters Paul later also wrote the letter unto these same Philippian Saints, and made this statement in PHILIPPIANS 4:22 *All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household.* So in bearing the name of the Lord Jesus Christ before Roman authorities, Paul was also a witness, and a testimony to those closely associated with them, and many of them became believers because of Paul's witness of Jesus Christ. Thus we find here in ACTS 16:37 Paul teaching this same kind of lesson to the Philippian jailor as he said unto the serjeants of Philippi in ACTS 16:37 *But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.* In other words Paul was stating that the magistrates had illegally publicly oppressed two innocent, and condemned citizens of Rome, and treated them as guilty, so in all fairness let the magistrates now come and publicly declare Paul and Silas innocent.

Paul was not expressing his bravado here, but rather under the unction of the Holy Ghost Paul was manifesting the freedom that a born again believer has in Christ Jesus. Jesus Himself taught in JOHN 8:36 *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.* Paul, of all people, knew the difference between law and grace, and the freedom that we have in Christ Jesus. Paul wrote in GALATIANS 5:1 *Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.* Paul wrote this verse to the Galatian Saints that were entangling themselves with the law of Moses, though as Christians they were free from the law of Moses. Here in ACTS 16 at Philippi we find the Roman rulers, who were familiar with the law of the land, Roman law in other words, not following Roman law. Paul and Silas were Roman citizens. As Roman citizens they had certain legal rights, which had not been followed by the magistrates. As a Roman citizen, and as a citizen of heaven, Paul knew that he had every right to "stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of Roman bondage," paraphrasing from GALATIANS 5:1. Paul and Silas already knew that it wasn't the magistrates who set them free, it was the Lord Jesus Christ who had freed them from the Philippian prison.

We made mention earlier in this study that Paul made sure in his teaching that when the topic of subjection came up concerning Roman law, it was to be recognized by believers that the

magistrates of the Roman Empire were put in place ultimately by the will of God. The last part of DANIEL 4:17 informs us: *...that the living may know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.* DANIEL 4:25 & 32, DANIEL 5:21 basically repeat this same theme. In the January 2020 edition of the Grace and Glory magazine Brother Hawkins on page 6 wrote the following: “Though we may not always fully understand what His purposes are, Christian must surely accept the fact that God has His reasons for placing kings and rulers in their respective spheres of authority. For example there were at least six assassination attempts made on Adolf Hitler’s life to remove him from power. Every one of them failed, even though that ungodly tyrant sought the complete annihilation of God’s Chosen People. We now know that out of that ungodly chaotic holocaust, Israel emerged as a nation in 1948.” {End of quoting Brother Hawkins.} We just celebrated President’s Day, and the History Channel did a six-hour special on our first President George Washington. As I watched this I realized that God protected George Washington way before he became our first President. He lost more battles than he won, and in one encounter his horse was shot out from under him, and his trench coat had three bullet holes in it, yet George Washington was not wounded! He was never wounded in all of the battles he was in! God knew that down the road a few years George Washington would be our first President in the founding years of this nation we live in called The United States of America. What a fragile beginning our nation had, and had it not been for the will of God, we really shouldn’t be enjoying the freedoms we have today. Thank God that He had His hand in the founding of our nation. Thank God for this fact recorded in DANIEL 5:21 *...that the most high God ruled in the kingdom of men, and that he appointeth over it whomsoever he will.* Our Apostle knew these same scriptures found in DANIEL, and Paul also knew who was in charge, so he wrote in ROMANS 13:1 *...For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.*

In our **midnight** Bible story of ACTS 16 Paul and Silas already knew that it wasn’t the magistrates who set them free, it was the Lord Jesus Christ who had freed them from the Philippian prison. We are examining ACTS 16:37 a little closer as Paul boldly addresses the serjeants, who were sent by the Philippian magistrates to let Paul and Silas go from the Philippian prison. ACTS 16:37 *But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.* Let’s look at Paul actions here in ACTS 16:37 from another angle. Recall in ACTS 16:10 that Luke writes after telling of Paul’s vision in Troas in verse 9: ACTS 16:10 *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.* We have shown in this study many elements of Paul’s gospel message had already been preached here at Philippi by Paul, and Silas, and Timothy and Luke, Paul’s traveling companions. And the main recipients of Paul’s gospel message so far at Philippi have been Lydia’s household, and the Philippian jailor, and his household. Now Paul’s gospel message has put on notice the Philippian magistrates, who were being instructed by Paul not to disgrace those who preach the gospel of Christ. Lest you think this statement is out of bounds, let’s jump ahead to a statement that is found about a month later after the time of this **midnight** Bible story of ACTS 16. In ACTS 17 we find that immediately after Paul, and Silas, and maybe even Timothy left Philippi that they passed through Amphipolis, and Apollonia, and came to Thessalonica where Paul preached for three weeks according to ACTS 17:3 *...that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.* There were certain Jews in Thessalonica that believed not, who had apparently heard how Paul and Silas were treated previously at Philippi. These Jews of Thessalonica that believed not gathered unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort and went unto the rulers of Thessalonica making this statement found in ACTS 17:6 *...These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.* The thing that had turned their world upside down was *...the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ...* found in 2 CORINTHIANS 4:6, which was part of Paul’s gospel message. Paul wrote in ROMANS 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.* It is obvious

from what we have studied in ACTS 16 that the Philippian magistrates indeed now knew that Paul and Silas were truly servants of the most high God that shew the way of salvation. This Philippian jailor believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and was saved along with his household. The Philippian magistrates didn't believe, and were afraid after the **midnight** earthquake of how they had treated Paul and Silas, but they really didn't want to have the gospel message preached unto themselves. They now wanted Paul and Silas just to leave town. These magistrates were not like King Agrippa, who in ACTS 26:28 ...*said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian.*

The thoughts we are expressing here are in total agreement with ROMANS 13:1. ROMANS 13:1 *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.* The Greek word translated "subject" here is *hupotasso* {hoop-ot-as'-so}, (number 5293 in the Strong's Greek Concordance), and translates into English as: "be subject to, put under, be subject unto, submit (one's) self unto, submit (one's) self to, be in subjection unto, put in subjection under, and subdue." It comes from a Greek military term meaning "to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader." The leader we are to be in subjection to is Jesus Christ, as He is in agreement with God the Father. When Paul writes in ROMANS 13:1 *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God,*... we see that the ultimate authority that we are in subjection to is God. When Paul writes, as he does in TITUS 3:1 *Put them in mind to be subject* (*hupotasso* {hoop-ot-as'-so}) *to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,*... the assumption here is that the reader knows that these lesser authorities are also in subjection to the ultimate authority of God Himself. However, as the case is here in ACTS 16, if the magistrates are wrong, for whatever reason, the Christian is still to be under the subjection of the Lord. And the magistrates in ACTS 16 are still obligated to follow the Roman law themselves. So Paul states in ACTS 16:37 *...They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.*

As we move on let's review several points the Apostle Paul was making known here. First of all he was a Christian, and he wasn't ashamed that this was his testimony. Secondly, he was a Roman citizen, and had been punished contrary to Roman law because he was a Christian. Thirdly, Paul and Silas punishment had been administered before the multitude in Philippi, without a trial, also contrary to Roman law, thus their release should be made known unto the multitude, which would also show their unjust treatment, and announce their innocence publicly. Forth, this would also strengthen the new converts at Philippi, and show them that God was indeed in control of all situations, and that they shouldn't fear what man could do to them. And a fifth most important point that was being emphasized here by Paul was that he put his **trust in the Lord**.

Let's discuss for a moment the importance of putting one's **trust in the Lord**. This is a key theme in the life of our Apostle Paul, that he put his **trust in the Lord**. The phrase "**trust in the Lord**" is found exactly nineteen times in scripture. The importance of noting this is to bring to our attention that the number nineteen is the number point to FAITH. How did Paul live his life? Paul lived his life "**by faith!**" We find the phrase "**by faith**" a total of thirty-seven times in scripture, and thirty-seven is the number associated with THE WORD OF GOD. According to REVELATION 19:13 THE WORD OF GOD is another name for Jesus! REVELATION 19:13 *And he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and his name is called The Word of God.* The first time that legal Pharisee Saul of Tarsus ever heard the term "**by faith**" was when Jesus Christ our Lord and Saviour arrested him on the road to Damascus, and told him in ACTS 26:16-18 that he was being sent unto the Gentiles *...To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me...* ACTS 26:18. Our Apostle Paul latched onto that phrase "**by faith**," and wrote this phrase thirty-four times in his letters to us. The large majority of the "**by faith**" statements Paul made are found in HEBREWS 11, the chapter about the heroes of faith. Again we repeat that it was our Apostle Paul who wrote: *...The just shall live by faith,*... in ROMANS 1:17;

GALATIANS 3:11; and HEBREWS 10:38. To live “**by faith**” means to put ones “**trust in the Lord.**” Paul wrote the phrase “**trust in the Lord**” twice in his writings, both in PHILIPPIANS. {See PHILIPPIANS 2:19 and 2:24.} Seventeen of the “**trust in the Lord**” statements are found in the Old Testament, which you can research on your own except for the following four. PSALMS 118:8 *It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in man.* 9 *It is better to trust in the LORD than to put confidence in princes.* PSALMS 125:1 *They that trust in the LORD shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever.* PROVERBS 3:5 *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.*

There is another phrase that is found nineteen times in scripture, which Paul himself uses eight times, and that phrase is “**I trust.**” “**I trust**” thus is a statement of faith, and especially so when connected with the fact of faith of trusting in God. Let’s look at some examples of how the phrase “**I trust**” is used in scripture. David’s song of deliverance is found in two different chapters of scripture, 2 SAMUEL 22 and PSALMS 18. 2 SAMUEL 22:3 reads: *The God of my rock; in him will I trust: he is my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my high tower, and my refuge, my saviour; thou savest me from violence.* This verse in PSALMS 18:2 reads a little differently, but says the same thing this way: *The LORD is my rock, and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my buckler, and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower.* We know David was an Old Testament worthy of faith found mentioned by name in HEBREWS 11:32, and we will read a few more of his “**I trust**” verses of scripture in a moment. But first let’s read an “**I trust**” quote from Job, another Old Testament worthy of faith. JOB 13:15 *Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him.* The following “**I trust**” verses all come from PSALMS David wrote. PSALMS 25:2 *O my God, I trust in thee: let me not be ashamed, let not mine enemies triumph over me.* PSALMS 31:6 *I have hated them that regard lying vanities: but I trust in the LORD.* PSALMS 52:8 *But I am like a green olive tree in the house of God: I trust in the mercy of God for ever and ever.* PSALMS 91:2 *I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in him will I trust.* PSALMS 144:1 *Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight: 2 My goodness, and my fortress; my high tower, and my deliverer; my shield, and he in whom I trust; who subdueth my people under me.* (This verse sound a lot like 2 SAMUEL 22:3, which we read above doesn’t it?)

Getting back to our **midnight** Bible story in ACTS 16 let’s read again verses 35-37, and notice how Paul was putting his **trust in the Lord** with his statement of verse 37. ACTS 16:35 *And when it was day, the magistrates sent the serjeants, saying, Let those men go.* 36 *And the keeper of the prison told this saying to Paul, The magistrates have sent to let you go: now therefore depart, and go in peace.* 37 *But Paul said unto them, They have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.* Paul wasn’t trying to pick a fight with these armed serjeants of the magistrates, but rather he was showing them, and the jailor that he was indeed trusting in the Lord, and that his confidence was in the Lord his deliverer, his defense, and shield, and fortress, and high tower.

Note what happen next: ACTS 16:38 *And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.* The Philippian magistrates didn’t fear God, but rather they feared Roman law, and they had just found out that they had violated Roman law the day before when they unjustly commanded the beating of Paul and Silas, whom they just learned were Roman citizens. We have already discussed the penalty for their violation of Roman law was death, and the confiscation of their property!

The question was asked me a couple of weeks ago; “how did one prove that he was a Roman citizen?” We noted from ACTS 22:28 that Paul was a “free born” Roman citizen, and by making this statement Paul was treated differently than if he was not a Roman citizen. It seems that he did not have to provide proof of his citizenship at that time. And perhaps Paul never did have to show proof positive that he was a Roman citizen, but in his case Paul would have been provided with such proof of his free born Roman citizenship shortly after his birth. According to the customs of Paul’s day a

Roman citizen was required to register the birth of his children within thirty days before a Roman official, and he received a wooden diptych (dip tick) recording the declaration, which acted as a certificate of citizenship for the child for the rest of his life. A diptych was a two-piece hinged tablet with waxed surfaces on the inside, seven inches high, and six inches wide. Written on the waxed surfaces was the date of birth, and the name of seven witnesses indicating the possession of Roman citizenship. The diptych could be used for life to prove citizenship, and was written only in Latin in Paul's day. The diptych was kind of like our passports. Apparently there were also written records of such citizenship recorded in a register of declarations in the city of registration. Scripture doesn't state if Paul ever had to provide any proof of his Roman citizenship. More important to Paul was his proof of heavenly citizenship, which he also wrote the Philippian Saints about in PHILIPPIANS 3:20, stating: *For our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.*

ACTS 16:37 *But Paul said unto them, (the serjeants) They (the magistrates) have beaten us openly uncondemned, being Romans, and have cast us into prison; and now do they thrust us out privily? nay verily; but let them come themselves and fetch us out.* 38 *And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans.* So we find the Philippian serjeants returning unto the magistrates, and informing them that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens, which again is why the magistrates feared. As requested by Paul and Silas the magistrates then went down to the prison. ACTS 16:39 *And they (the magistrates) came and besought them, (Paul and Silas) and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city.* It was very humiliating for the Philippian magistrates to go back down to the prison, and admit to Paul and Silas that they were wrong in having them beaten, and thrown into jail. Actually the magistrates never really ever wanted to see Paul and Silas again. The word "besought" here means these magistrates were begging and pleading with Paul and Silas. A more proper response would have been for them to ask, like the jailor did, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" The magistrates now saw Paul and Silas as a threat unto them, and their own immediate future. So the magistrates begged Paul and Silas to leave Philippi. There was no public apology by the magistrates. The magistrates now urgent request was for Paul and Silas to leave town without further once again stirring up the citizens of Philippi. So the magistrates did bring Paul and Silas out of the prison themselves, and set them free in front of all who were there to witness this event.

Before we read ACTS 16:40, and conclude this **midnight** Bible story, let's consider here the big picture of what just place here at Philippi. We already discussed the glorious time in the Lord Paul and Silas had since the **midnight** earthquake. Words cannot express the Holy Spirit high that they had experienced since leading the Philippian jailor, and his house to the Lord during the **midnight** hours! That euphoria would still be with Paul and Silas even when the magistrates came early in the morning to let them go. The Lord had already set Paul and Silas free at **midnight**, so the magistrates couldn't take credit for their freedom. And Paul, as an Apostle unto the Gentiles, and our example of whom to follow as he followed Christ, had a great responsibility here in his actions before the magistrates. We have shown in this **midnight** Bible story how the Lord had now given Paul and Silas the keys to the city of Philippi! The magistrates could no longer keep them in prison, nor could they stop them from spreading the good news gospel message of Jesus Christ. And with this freedom came the opportunity that Paul saw in his **midnight** vision of ACTS 16:9 where ...*There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us.* Paul and Silas were now free to help those of Macedonia learn about Christ Jesus. The magistrates did want Paul and Silas to leave Philippi, and since Paul and Silas weren't there to stir up trouble, as a good testimony to the magistrates, who had been sufficiently humbled by the Apostles, Paul and Silas honored their request to depart out of the city. However Paul's gospel message didn't leave town, and down the road a few years Paul would return to Philippi, and when he did return, if the same magistrates were still in charge, they would be powerless to do any further harm to our beloved Apostle. And Paul and Silas still retained the keys to the city of Philippi because it was the Lord who had given them

Philippi in the first place. We must also realize because of Paul and Silas having preached Christ unto them, the Saints at Philippi were shown some respect at Philippi.

ACTS 16:40 *And they (Paul and Silas) went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.* We find in ACTS 16:40 Paul and Silas heeded the magistrates request to depart out of the city after a fashion. Paul and Silas left Philippi in a leisurely fashion at their own convenience. They made a stop at the house of Lydia where they had been staying. There they comforted the brethren, meaning Lydia and her household, and whatever other believers were now there, along with Timothy and Luke. The word “comforted” here means to exhort, that is to pursue a course of conduct always looking forward, and upward, and pressing toward the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus, as Paul later wrote them in PHILIPPIANS 3:14. Paul wanted them to rejoice in the Lord always as he later also wrote them in PHILIPPIANS 4:4. Having now laid the foundation of Christ at Philippi, Paul and Silas, and probably Timothy departed Philippi as ACTS 16:40 states. Luke it seems stayed at Philippi for we do not read his first hand accounts again until ACTS 20:6, which occurred about six years later. Paul and Silas, in heeding this request of the magistrates, were themselves showing the heart attitude of full overcomers, much the same as Stephen had shown at his death when he cried out in ACTS 7:60 *...Lord, lay not this sin to their charge.* Such an overcoming attitude must have spoken volumes to the Saints at Philippi, and have even reached down to even the lowest of sinners, (figuratively speaking), which may have been the magistrates themselves.

As we conclude the **midnight** Bible story found in ACTS 16 let’s take note that Paul’s time spent here in Philippi, though brief, opened the door to his preaching the gospel message in Macedonia, and Achaia, modern day Greece. The events that happened to Paul and Silas in this **midnight** Bible story of ACTS 16 became world wide famous, as we have noted before. Paul after he left Philippi with Silas in ACTS 17 passed through Amphipolis, and Apollonia, and came to Thessalonica where Paul preached for three weeks according to ACTS 17:3 *...that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.* There were certain Jews in Thessalonica that believed not, who had apparently heard how Paul and Silas were treated previously at Philippi. These Jews of Thessalonica that believed not gathered unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort and went unto the rulers of Thessalonica making this statement found in ACTS 17:6 *...These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also.* The thing that had turned their world upside down was *...the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ...* found in 2 CORINTHIANS 4:6, which was part of Paul’s gospel message. Paul wrote in ROMANS 1:16 *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.*

From Thessalonica Paul and Silas went by night unto Berea, which is another **midnight** Bible story that we are not told much about. In Berea we read in ACTS 17:11 *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.* Brother Hill often brought the Berean Saint’s to our attention because the Apostle Paul and Silas were only there a short period of time, maybe as little as six weeks to three month, yet the Bereans’ were fervently seeking God’s best. Obviously they also were friendlier to Paul and Silas than had been the people of Philippi, or even Thessalonica. Their noble mindset shows a quality of heart that all full overcomers must have, which include the following: (1) they were attentive listeners to Paul’s gospel message; (2) they received Paul’s gospel message with all readiness of mind; with a willing mind in other words; (3) they verified what Paul taught was true by searching out the scriptures daily whether he was telling them the truth or not; and (4) they continued examining the scriptures daily, showing that the Word of God was front and center in their daily lives. One commentator put it like this: they received Paul’s gospel with “all readiness, as a hungry man receives his food, and greedily feeds upon it, or as a man ready to perish receives and lays a hold of anything that offers for his safety.” Because of their exuberance we read the following: ACTS 17:12 *Therefore many of them believed; also of honourable women which were*



Greeks, and of men, not a few. We learn from the Berean Saints what it takes to be a racecourse runner, and that it only takes a short time to begin this pursuit to have God's best. Their encouragement to us is to search the scriptures daily as we constantly are looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith... HEBREWS 12:2.

After this short time in Berea we read: ACTS 17:13 *But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people. 14 And then immediately the brethren sent away Paul to go as it were to the sea: but Silas and Timotheus abode there still. 15 And they that conducted Paul brought him unto Athens: and receiving a commandment unto Silas and Timotheus for to come to him with all speed, they departed.* The remainder of ACTS 17 tells the story of Paul's time in Athens, and his famous sermon on Mars' hill. Mars' hill is still a tourist attraction in Athens where they point out that the Apostle Paul once preached here. In ACTS 18 Paul departs Athens and goes west about fifty miles to Corinth. Almost immediately Paul meets Aquila and Priscilla, who took Paul into their own house. Aquila and Priscilla were noble minded like the Berean Saints, and soaked in Paul's gospel message like a sponge, and were later used of the Lord to teach Paul's gospel message unto Apollos, who then became one of the Church Apostles himself! Silas and Timothy finally catch back up with Paul at Corinth, and after a period of time we find another **midnight** Bible story that gave Paul direction for the next couple of years. After first preaching to the Jews in the synagogue every sabbath at Corinth we read starting in ACTS 18:5 *And when Silas and Timotheus were come from Macedonia, Paul was pressed in the spirit, and testified to the Jews that Jesus was Christ. 6 And when they opposed themselves, and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, Your blood be upon your own heads; I am clean: from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles. 7 And he departed thence, and entered into a certain man's house, named Justus, one that worshipped God, whose house joined hard to the synagogue. 8 And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized. 9 Then spake the Lord to Paul in the **night** by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: 10 For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city.* The encouragement our Apostle Paul received in his **midnight** vision from the Lord here was to be not afraid to speak unto these Corinthians, for the Lord knew that there would be many people in Corinth that would give their hearts unto the Lord. And we read next in ACTS 18:11 *And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.*

Looking back from this point we find that once Paul got to Philippi, he was able to stay in the cities of Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, and Athens only a short period of time before being run out of town. Of those four cities he was able to stay at Berea the longest, maybe three months. Now here at Corinth the Lord told him in a **midnight** vision that this stay would be longer, and it was. While at Corinth Paul would write his first two epistles, which are 1 & 2 THESSALONIANS, where he wrote reminders of what happened to him at Philippi. 1 THESSALONIANS 2:1 *For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain: 2 But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention. 1 THESSALONIANS 3:4 For verily, when we were with you, we told you before that we should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know.* Then in 2 THESSALONIANS Paul wrote: 2 THESSALONIANS 3:1 *Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: 2 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith. 3 But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil. 4 And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you. 5 And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.* Note here in verse 5 that the love of God has no bounds, no limitations, no restrictions, and is mandatory in the life of all full overcomers. The phrase "...patient waiting..." is only found this one time in scripture and note the reference again: *And the Lord direct your hearts into the... ..patient waiting for Christ.* The first assumption we correctly make concerning ...the patient waiting for Christ... concerns Jesus soon coming, whose

return we all should be patiently waiting for. Jesus coming to catch His Bride away will be the greatest event of this church age, for which a small rib company of Saints are patiently waiting. This rib portion company of Saints' focus is upon Christ Jesus in every thing, which brings us to the second and most important point of this statement: *And the Lord direct your hearts into the... ..patient waiting for Christ,...* which is patience. Later in life Paul wrote in ROMANS 5 some facts about patience. ROMANS 5:3 *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.* The Philadelphian Saint has learned from studying Paul's gospel, and searching the scriptures like the Berean Saints did, to let the Lord direct their hearts into the patient waiting for Christ in everything. This means the full overcomer let's the Lord, and the Holy Ghost direct their hearts into the patient waiting for Christ in every big thing, in every little thing, and in every event that is in their life! To the Philadelphian Saints, full overcomers from this church age, Jesus says in REVELATION 3:10 *Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.* If we are to achieve Bride of Christ status we must be like the Berean Saints, who searched the word of His patience daily, and thus fell deeply in love with Him! Thus when in our own **midnight** test we can be found praying, and singing praises unto God like Paul and Silas did in ACTS 16:25.