

Paul has cast a demon out of the slave girl who earned much money for her masters by divination, prophesying by means of a pythian serpent spirit. Her masters stirred up the populace and Paul and Silas were cast into innermost cell of the jail. God caused an earthquake which opened all the doors of the prison and loosed all the prisoners' shackles. The jailer, thinking all had escaped, was about to kill himself:

Acts 16:28: *'But Paul cried with a loud voice, saying, Do thyself no harm: for we are all here. ²⁹ Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, ³⁰ And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? ³¹ And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.'*

Verse 32: *' And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house.'*

What Paul spoke to the Philippian jailer and all who were in his house was the Word of God! If Luke had written down all that he had said, we might have that before us as even more of the Word of God but, that wasn't God's Will but it was His Will for those things to be said unto this group, and it may have been a large group just like at the home of Cornelius who probably invited everyone he knew. Now, the Philippian jailer who had witnessed a mighty miracle and who had surely known of the demon's having been cast out of the famous local 'prophetess,' he, too, may have invited everyone he knew, and he was not some lowly slave type person; his was an office of responsibility as was surely planned by God; remember, since Pentecost, by and large, God draws crowds to Himself in these early years of the True Church.

Something else about Paul's speaking and writing the Word of the Lord, the Word of God: Paul had been miraculously converted and later taken up into Heaven to be taught from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, all that he was to later speak and write. I believe he never deviated from all his Heavenly instruction, that everything he spoke to the Gentiles and Jews throughout the times and places of his ministry and to every group he planted as a new Church, were the exact things he wrote in all the Letters which God has preserved for our Salvation, growth and maturity.

Paul was faithful, faithful to the end! In fact, he knew he was straining forward in faithfulness so that he could write: *'Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and **keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you.**'* 1Cor 11:1

Paul was given and he delivered the ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ unto His True Church; he had delivered the ordinances to the Church at Corinth long before he ever wrote to them this, his First Letter to the Corinthians.

Verse 33: *'And he (the Jailor) 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.'*

This is all happening in the middle of the night; it was midnight when the earthquake hit; now it might be around 4 AM; it took a while for Paul to explain the whole Gospel to him and all those in his household but their hearts and minds were open, prepared by God and ready for the Truth. The jailor is rejoicing! God has opened his heart and mind to the most stupendous Truth in all of time and eternity! He has been saved, he has been forgiven and he and all his family have Eternal Life! That is real cause for rejoicing! The next day, joining with Lydia and other new believers, he will begin to tell everyone he knows the wonderful news, the Gospel of God's Grace unto Eternal Life! The Philippian Church is born!

Verse 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.'*

He can't wait to tell Paul and Silas the good news! 'You're free to go! So, please, for your own safety... go!' But Paul is having none of it!

Verse 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.'*

The magistrates knew they had acted illegally, even though that's never stopped anyone from persecution of Christians or Jews. Remember, that's what the 'owners' of the slave girl, freed from demons, had said to the magistrates: *'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 are Romans or, at least, those living under Roman rule while these are merely Jews! *Off with their heads!* *'If you care about Roman law, you'll punish these Jews!'* But they had, in fact, broken Roman law in how they treated Paul and Silas and, so, now they wanted them gone quickly and quietly before the rabble woke up to cause even more trouble for the magistrates.

Though Paul was always willing to suffer for Jesus Christ and the Gospel, he was unwilling to be wrongly accused and, thus, causing a cloud to be over the Gospel; by Law, the Lex Porcia (B.C. 247), Roman citizens were exempted from degrading punishment, such as that of scourging; he demanded to be dismissed honorably in proof that Jesus Christ's ministers were not law breakers and common criminals.

This same scenario will play out again when Paul is back in Jerusalem: *'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.'* Acts 22:25

Paul is a freeborn Roman citizen on Earth which has its real advantages just as our being freeborn citizens of the United States of America has its real advantages but like Paul, our first loyalty is to our real home and citizenship: Heaven under the Eternal Rule of the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords under Whom we will rule and reign forever!

Verse 38: *'And the serjeants told these words unto the magistrates: and they feared, when they heard that they were Romans. ³⁹ And they came and besought them, and brought them out, and desired them to depart out of the city.'*

We were wrong, please forgive us and please don't tell anyone what we did...

Paul could have made life very difficult for these magistrates if he had reported them to the Roman authorities... very difficult indeed!

Verse 40: *'And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia: and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them, and departed.'*

Instead of leaving the city, as politely requested, they went to Lydia's house where she, along with Luke, Timothy and the rest of the Believers in Philippi, had been fervently praying, all night, for Paul and Silas' safety and release. Now, here they were to the great joy and comfort of everyone and after giving them final words of encouragement and exhortation, they left Philippi for Thessalonica.

Acts 17:1: *'Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews and Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,'*

Thessalonica has a Jewish synagogue into which Paul enters to reason with the Jews about Jesus Christ. Philippi did not have a synagogue so he went down by the river where people met to pray. Every place which has a synagogue, Paul goes to the Jews first; otherwise, it's to the Gentiles.

Here, as always, he spends at least 2 weeks/3 Sabbaths convincing the Jews from their own Scriptures the Truth of the Lord Jesus Christ as the promised, prophesied Messiah. Those whom God had chosen from the foundation of the World have hearts and minds that are open and ready for Salvation; those not, will be the

next herd of beasts who will seek Paul's death but he is always ready to preach the Gospel, no matter the cost or the result.

Verse 3: *'Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.'*

This is the major stumbling block for Jews concerning the Messiah: that He first had to suffer and die. He was expected to come as a conquering king who would defeat the Romans and immediately establish the Promised Kingdom with Israel as the head of the nations. They were, and continue to be, blinded to the Truth of Scripture which says that He would be despised and rejected, betrayed and crucified, that He would come two separate times: first as the Lamb of God Who would be the Ultimate Sacrifice for sin and then, again, as the conquering King of kings Who will rule and reign forever. All that blinded Jews, and Gentiles for that matter, all they can see, even now, is a weak, mild man, a good teacher who was crucified, died and was buried, never to be heard from again...

The real tragedy lies in the hearts of those who acknowledge that, yes, maybe He is the Son of God; maybe He did rise from the dead; maybe He will come again... but what is that to me!?! That is the belief and attitude of so, so many today in America, Canada, Australia, etc... places where people should know better but just don't care. Imagine the horror of closing their eyes in death to immediately awaken in Hades, Sheol, the place of the dead with the sudden, stark raving realization that it was all true, like they'd really known all along but now it is too late... imagine the horror!

Verse 4: *'And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.'*

Some Jews believed... a few... a great multitude of Greeks and of the chief women... *not a few*... so we see again, the Lord Jesus Christ is building His Church but it will be comprised of many more Gentiles than Jews.

Some Jews believed and consorted with Paul and Silas. Consorted is an interesting choice of word. The Greek word is: *proskleroo*; this is the only time it is used. It means: *to add or assign by lot, to allot*; God had assigned them, allotted them to His Church, from the foundation of the World and, even more, the word consort means: *to associate with (someone), typically with the disapproval of others*.

These Jews who believe and turn in faith to the Lord Jesus Christ, are doing so under the disapproval of their fellow Jews, many of whom will be the next group to persecute Paul and Silas. These are the Jews, the Hebrews to whom the Letter to the Hebrews will later be written: those tempted to turn back from following Jesus Christ because of the disapproval and persecution from their fellow, unbelieving Jews.

Verse 5: *'But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.'*

Who are these wicked Jews who, rather than minding their own business, believing their 'religion' is the right way, worshipping in their own synagogues, being faithful husbands and fathers, who, instead have this demonic compulsion to disrupt and extinguish this New, Living and Only Way to Salvation... what causes such evil?

First, they were **moved with envy** which is listed in Gal. 5 as one of the 'works of the flesh,' and that *'... the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh... Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, ²⁰ Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, ²¹ Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like...'* Gal 5:17

The foundation of all sin, even as it was originally, in Lucifer, is **rebellion manifest in pride and envy**. Ezekiel writes of Lucifer: *'Thus saith the Lord God; Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty... Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee... Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness'* Ezek 28:12 and: *'For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I*

*will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: ¹⁴ I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; **I will be like the most High.**' Isa 14:13*

What we see in Lucifer's fall is, basically, he refused to submit to God's Perfection, Sovereignty, His Overall Overallness! Lucifer refused to submit! In his rebellion he saw himself as God's equal and wanted God's place: pride and envy... and, so, rebellious pride and envy are the fruits of man's fallen, sin-natured flesh which Satan can most easily fan into the flame which then consumes and destroys the sinful man.

These Jews we've seen throughout Paul's travels were moved with rebellion, pride and envy unto murderous hatred. Why?... because they refused to submit to the Truth of God's Word; they pridefully relied on their Circumcision and the Law as their true way and inwardly, they seethingly envied the Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, etc in these people, these fruits which come only through submission and faith in their True Messiah, Whom these did hatefully crucify some years before, and they could never bring themselves to humbly confess that what they had done was so, so evil and that Jesus Christ would actually forgive them; that was just too much! And, of course, they hated Paul, especially, because they were completely unable to refute his Scriptural understanding and clear presentation of the Truth of the New Covenant replacing their Old Covenant.

So, being too weak in themselves, they gathered a company of lewd fellows of the baser sort and sought to kill them again...

Verse 6: *'And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also;'*

They could see the evidence of God at work in 'turning the world upside down!' and they hated Him for it! Now... here's the clincher!

Verse 7: *'Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus.'*

Their main accusation: these Christians say there is a king other than Caesar! Where did we previously hear something like that from, perhaps, these very same Jews?

*'... and (Pilate) saith unto the Jews, Behold your King! ¹⁵ But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, **We have no king but Caesar.**'* John 19:14

Nero was Caesar during Paul's ministry; he was without question that time's current antichrist; he instigated the worst persecutions of Christians by blaming them for the great fire which destroyed much of Rome in AD 64.

Here, Paul, Silas and Jason's crime: they say there is another king instead of our own antichrist, Caesar!

Jesus said: *'I am come in my Father's name, and ye receive me not: if another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive.'* John 5:43 He was speaking of Caesar whom they would embrace after rejecting Himself and then, finally, of the Antichrist who will come, soon, to begin the Tribulation whom they will receive.

At the Crucifixion, they also said: *'Then answered **all the people**, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children.'* Matt 27:25

The Jews in Thessalonica as well as those we've seen in Antioch and elsewhere, seeking, again, Paul's death, may be some of the very ones who had traveled to Jerusalem for that Passover, calling for the Crucifixion of their True Messiah!

Verse 8: *'And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. ⁹ And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.'*

Jason and the others arrested were required to post bail; doubtless they'd have returned to their fellows rejoicing to have been blessed to suffer persecution for Jesus Christ.

Verse 10: *'And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.'* Finally... to the noble Bereans!