

ACTS: Fresh Converts & Fresh Trouble

Acts 16:11-24

From Troas to Philippi (v. 11-12)

- Paul and company set sail from Troas on the east coast of modern Turkey
 - They make good time and arrive on the island of Samothrace in one day
- They finish the journey to Macedonia the next day, docking in Neapolis
 - Then traveling about 10 miles eastward on the Via Egnatia to the large city of Philippi
- Overall, the trip is about 156 miles

A New Convert (v. 14-15)

- Paul's normal tactic when entering a new city was to find the synagogue, the Jewish house of meeting
 - It was Jewish custom to build them outside the city proper, especially when there was a large Gentile religious presence
 - Often near water so they could practice ceremonial washing
- Paul does not find a synagogue, but rather a prayer meeting of women
 - Both Jews and God-fearing Gentiles
 - This may have been because there was not at least 10 Jewish men to establish a synagogue, as per instructions from the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council in Jerusalem
- Among them is a woman named Lydia
 - God-fearing Gentile
 - Either a widower or unmarried
 - A wealthy businesswoman who sold expensive purple goods
 - From Thyatira in Asia
- Upon hearing Paul's message, she puts her trust in Jesus
 - And is immediately baptized as a public confession of her faith
- She then insists that the party stay with her at her home

A Freed Girl & Jailed Servants (v. 16-24)

- As they traveled back to the place of prayer, Paul and company are set upon a slave girl
 - She is described as having a "python" spirit upon her
 - A reference to the Greek story of Apollo and the Oracle of Delphi
 - It was used in the LXX to mean a demonic spirit of divination
- After she harasses Paul & co. to make it difficult for them to preach
 - Paul casts the demonic spirit from her
- When her owners find this out, they bring Paul & Silas before the rulers of the city and accuse them of disturbing the city with their religious speech
 - Their real concern was that their slave had lost her value to them
- The crowd joins in the accusations
 - Which results in the Apostles being beat and imprisoned
- The Irony: The Apostles came to Philippi to set people free, and it results in their imprisonment
 - But God had different designs

So What?

- Like Paul, are we sharing Christ with those who are willing to hear?
 - Preaching about Jesus who sets us free
- Are we willing to suffer for this mission?

Meditation Verse: *Romans 1:16*