

THRU THE BIBLE EXPOSITION

Acts: The Continuing Earthly Ministry Of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Part VI: The Ministry Of The Universal Church In Its Spread To The Ends Of The Earth, Acts 8:26-28:31

E. Christ's Use Of The Apostle Paul To Spearhead Worldwide Outreach, Acts 14:4-28:31

12. Christ's Use Of Satanic Opposition From A Secular Government Realm To Advance Discipling (Acts 16:11-40)

I. Introduction

- A. Many Christians face opposition from secular governments that are influenced by Satan, Matthew 4:8-9.
- B. However, Christ's sovereignty over His Universal Church is so great, He **uses** even Satanic opposition to believers and their works through such governments to advance discipling as illustrated in Acts 16:11-40:

II. Christ's Use Of Satanic Opposition From A Secular Government Realm To Advance Discipling.

- A. When Paul, Silas, Timothy (Acts 16:3) and Luke (who joined the other three at Troas, cf. Acts 16:10) came to Philippi, they entered a city that was a Roman colony, "a piece of Rome transplanted abroad, so that those who held citizenship in a colony enjoyed the same rights they would have had if they had lived in Italy," Acts 16:11-13; Ryrie Study Bible, KJV, 1978 ed., ftn. to Acts 16:12.
- B. Thus, coming to a piece of Rome itself, Paul's team went out to the riverside on the Sabbath to meet Jews and give them the Gospel, Acts 16:13. The lack of ten Jewish men meant no synagogue could be set up in Philippi, and why Paul expected to see Jews in this case worshiping at a river. (Ibid., ftn. to Acts 16:13)
- C. They met some women there, and evangelized them, with Lydia, a seller of purple from Thyatira, a believer in Israel's God, being moved by the Father to trust in Christ, Acts 16:14 with John 17:6; 6:44-45.
- D. She was then baptized with her household which also believed, and she housed Paul's team, Acts 16:15.
- E. However, Satanic opposition via a demon-possessed girl countered Paul in his work, Acts 16:16-18a:
 - 1. A demon-possessed girl, indwelt by a spirit described in the Greek Testament as "as spirit, a python," followed and plagued Paul's team, Bible Know. Com., N. T., p. 399. Greek mythology indicates this spirit would predict the future, probably saying the opposite of what was true as a lying spirit.
 - 2. Thus, when this girl followed Paul's team, claiming they were followers of the Most High God who gave the gospel of salvation, the actual truth, the fact that she with her reputation was making this statement left the people at Philippi believing the **opposite, discrediting** Paul's effort! (Acts 16:17)
- F. To counter the demon's discrediting effort, after many days, Paul exorcised the demon, Acts 16:18b.
- G. Nevertheless, Satan moved the exorcised girl's masters who had made a lot of money off by her predictions to discredit Paul and Silas, claiming they as Jews had undermined Roman government rules, leading the Philippian rulers severely to beat and imprison the missionaries, Acts 16:19-24.
- H. However, as Paul and Silas trusted God, singing praises to God that night in the prison, God validated their Gospel and testimony by sending a great earthquake to open the prison doors and loosen all shackles, 16:25-26. This act of the Lord caused a great spread of the Gospel and advance of discipling, 16:27-40:
 - 1. The prison keeper initially contemplated suicide for losing jurisdiction of his prisoners, but Paul hindered him, announcing that all of his prisoners were still there, Acts 16:27-28.
 - 2. The keeper asked what he should do to be saved, and Paul replied that he and his household would be saved by simply trusting in Christ, Acts 16:29-31. This passage is proof of justification by faith alone.
 - 3. The keeper believed, then led his family to trust in Christ, and then washed the wounds of Paul and Silas caused by the beating they had received, and fed them a meal, Acts 16:32-34.
 - 4. In the morning, the magistrates wanted to release Paul and Silas, but since their Gospel had been discredited by their beating, Paul replied they had beaten uncondemned men who were Roman citizens, a serious crime, Acts 16:35-37a; Ibid., ftn. to Acts 16:37. Thus, Paul had them escort him and Silas out of prison in honor before the town to restore credit to them and their Gospel, Acts 16:37b-39.
 - 5. Out of prison, Paul and Silas met and comforted Lydia's household before leaving the city, 16:40.

Lesson: Christ actually USED Satanic opposition that also involved opposition by Roman government authority at Philippi against Paul's outreach effort to ADVANCE his outreach for His glory.

Application: If we face great spiritual evil opposition even from secular government authorities, we must trust that it is all WITHIN the PERMISSIVE PLAN of GOD, and function by FAITH in Him!