

GOD'S CALLING IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Lesson Nineteen

IN ACTS: Lydia and the Jailer of Philippi

Burden to Impart:

God's salvation is able to convert the foe into a friend, a harassing jailer into a beloved disciple. God causes all things (even earthquakes) to work together for good for His called ones.

Memory Verse: "...Believe on the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household" (Acts 16:31).

Facts to Teach: [Scripture reading: Acts 16:8-34]

1. As Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke traveled visiting the new young churches and preaching the gospel, the Lord one night gave Paul a vision. He dreamed that a man from Macedonia (Europe) was calling him and saying, "Come over into Macedonia and help us!" (Acts 16:9-10). Paul and his company immediately sailed there, concluding that God had called them to preach the gospel there.
2. They came to a leading city called Philippi. On the Sabbath they went down by the river where people often gathered for prayer. There Paul shared the gospel with a woman named Lydia and the Lord opened her heart. She was so touched that she was baptized and her whole house (Acts 16:12-15). The door had been opened to Europe.
3. A tormented woman who had a demon followed Paul for many days, crying out things and disturbing him. Paul finally cast the demon out of the woman. When the woman's masters realized that they could no longer make money on her (for she used to be a fortune teller), they laid hold on Paul and Silas, dragged them off to the marketplace, falsely accused them, and had them beaten with rods and thrown into prison (Acts 16:16-23).
4. In the prison, Paul and Silas met the jailer. He wanted to be sure there was no possible way of escape, so he threw them into the inner prison and secured their feet in stocks (an instrument of torture with holes to hold the prisoner's wrists, ankles, and neck). How painful! And how pitiful! Beaten, imprisoned, and in stocks for casting a demon out of a woman! Yet Paul and Silas could not be stopped. At midnight, unable to sleep, they prayed. Then they began to sing praises to God. All the prisoners were listening (Acts 16:24-25).
5. Suddenly, a great earthquake shook the very foundations of the prison, opened every door, and loosened every prisoner's chain. The jailer supposed that the prisoners had fled. This would mean that he would be executed for failing to guard them. Instead of waiting to be executed shamefully, he was going to kill himself by falling down on his sword. When Paul saw this he told him to stop, for they were all still there. The jailer then tremblingly asked Paul the way of salvation. That night the jailer and his whole family were saved and baptized. The jailer washed their beaten backs and set a table before them. He and his family rejoiced greatly to be saved.