

strategy for ministry, from his methods in Thessalonica? (b) What kinds of people responded to Paul's message and what was that message? (c) How did a riot get started in Thessalonica? Who were most affected by it?

[Note: It was the custom in the Roman Empire to prove one's loyalty by declaring: "Caesar is Lord." However, true believers in Jesus, as the Christ, often responded with: "Jesus Christ is Lord."]

(d) What accusations were made before the city council? (e) In today's world, what are some accusations that people who want to stir up trouble, sometimes use against Christians? (f) What ideas do you have about some ways followers of Jesus might be able to avoid needless trouble by being more sensitive to subjects that could easily stir up anger?

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An Interactive Life Application Bible Study of the Acts of the Apostles for Small Groups

Key: *Blue* = New Testament *Red* = Words of Jesus
Green = Old Testament Quotes

Lesson 22

1. Background: Lesson 21 ended with Paul and Silas locked up in the jail in the city of Philippi. Their feet were clamped in stocks. The owner of a slave girl was angry at Paul for delivering her from the demon who helped her tell fortunes. Her owner could no longer use her to make a good living? Like most Roman jails, the jailer was under a death sentence if he allowed his prisoners to escape.

2. Deliverance of Paul, Silas and the Philippian Jailer

Acts 16:25-34 Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening. ²⁶ Suddenly, there was a massive earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations. All the doors immediately flew open, and the chains of every prisoner fell off! ²⁷ The jailer woke up to see the prison doors wide open. He assumed the prisoners had escaped, so he drew his sword to kill himself. ²⁸ But Paul shouted to him, "Stop! Don't kill yourself! We are all here!"

²⁹ The jailer called for lights and ran to the dungeon and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ Then he brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

³¹ They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, along with everyone in your household." ³² And they shared the word of the Lord with him and with all who lived in his household. ³³ Even at that hour of the night, the jailer cared for them and washed their wounds. Then he and everyone in his household were immediately baptized. ³⁴ He brought them into his house and set a meal before them, and he and his entire household rejoiced because they all believed in God.

3. Discussion: (a) How can you explain the fact that Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God in such difficult circumstances? (b) Do you think it was merely a coincidence that a great earthquake occurred at that particular time? Why or why not? (c) Why do you think none of the prisoners tried to escape when the earthquake occurred? (d) How do you explain the jailors reaction after finding the prisoners all present and accounted for? (e) What do you think the jailer meant when he asked, "What must I do to be saved?" (f) Why is the answer that Paul and Silas gave, still appropriate today for anyone who wants to know how to be saved? (g) What evidences do you see that the jailer and his household experienced an amazing transformation in their lives? (h) What, if anything, would you especially like to remember from this event that you could apply to your own life?

4. Paul asserts his rights as a Roman citizen

Acts 16:35-40 The next morning the city officials sent the police to tell the jailer, "Let those men go!" ³⁶ So the jailer told Paul, "The city officials have said you and Silas are free to leave. Go in peace."

³⁷ But Paul replied, "They have publicly beaten us without a trial and put us in prison—and we are Roman citizens. So now they want us to leave secretly? Certainly not! Let them come themselves to release us!" [Note: As Roman citizens, Paul and Silas had a right to a fair trial before being sentenced.]

³⁸ When the police reported this, the city officials were alarmed to learn that Paul and Silas were Roman citizens. ³⁹ So they came to the jail and apologized to them. Then they brought them out and begged them to leave the city. ⁴⁰ When Paul and Silas left the prison, they returned to the home of Lydia. There they met with the believers and encouraged them once more. Then they left town.

5. Discussion: (a) Do you think Paul was wise to complain

to the city officials for not allowing them their rights as Roman citizens? Why or why not? (b) How does the visit of Paul and Silas to the home of Lydia show they were not quickly fleeing the area in humiliation and fear?

6. Paul Preaches in Thessalonica.

Acts 17:1-9 Paul and Silas then traveled through the towns of Amphipolis and Apollonia and came to Thessalonica, [All 3 towns would be in the area of modern N. E. Greece.] where there was a Jewish synagogue. ² As was Paul's custom, he went to the synagogue service, and for three Sabbaths in a row he used the Scriptures to reason with the people. ³ He explained the prophecies and proved that the Messiah must suffer and rise from the dead. He said, "This Jesus I'm telling you about is the Messiah." ⁴ Some of the Jews who listened were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with many God-fearing Greek men and quite a few prominent women.

⁵ But some of the Jews were jealous, so they gathered some troublemakers from the marketplace to form a mob and start a riot. They attacked the home of Jason, searching for Paul and Silas so they could drag them out to the crowd. ⁶ Not finding them there, they dragged out Jason and some of the other believers instead and took them before the city council. "Paul and Silas have caused trouble all over the world," they shouted, "and now they are here disturbing our city, too." ⁷ And Jason has welcomed them into his home. They are all guilty of treason against Caesar, for they profess allegiance to another king, named Jesus."

⁸ The people of the city, as well as the city council, were thrown into turmoil by these reports. ⁹ So the officials forced Jason and the other believers to post bond, and then they released them.

7. Discussion: (a) What can we learn about Paul's common