

THE BOOK OF ACTS

ACTS 16:26-40 | LESSON SUMMARY

The Jailer

ACTS 16:24, "About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them..." (ESV)

- Worship
 - God is omnipresent
 - The other prisoners listening
- A realization has been building throughout the book of Acts in terms of proximity to God
 - Worshipping here would have been antithetical to anywhere and any way they would have worshipped before

ACTS 16:26, "...and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened." (ESV)

- Supernatural earthquake
- All prisoners free to leave, yet all stay

ACTS 16:27, "When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped." (ESV)



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- This prison guard knew that he would be executed if a prisoner escaped
 - The shame of such a sentence, as well as the stress of awaiting public humiliation would have been overwhelming
 - Paul and Silas put his life before their own

ACTS 16:29-30, "And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" (ESV)

- His question acknowledges the supernatural power of that moment
 - Shackles don't typically break in an earthquake

ACTS 16:33, "And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family." (ESV)

- Jailer's home was likely above the prison
 - He follows their example

ACTS 16:37, "But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us publicly, un-condemned, men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison; and do they now throw us out secretly? No! Let them come themselves and take us out." (ESV)



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- Paul knows that their treatment was not lawful
 - They were sentenced with no trial, they were publicly beaten without any proof of guilt
 - The magistrates are informed and come to apologize
 - They ask Paul and Silas to leave
- Paul and Silas go back to Lydia's home before leaving
 - Lydia, possibly the slave girl, and this Philippian jailer and his family are the first church in Phillipi
 - Luke's use of "they" possibly implies he stayed a bit longer to help grow this church

ACTS 16:40, "So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia. And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed." (ESV)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES: Zondervan, Holman Bible Atlas, Acts: Archeological Study Bible, John B. Miller, Convinced That God Had Called Us, C. Hemer, The Book of Acts in the Setting of Hellenistic History

