

Paul and Silas beaten and thrown into prison

Acts 16:16-24

As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and us, crying out, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.” And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And it came out that very hour.

Acts 16:16-18

But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, “These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice.” The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods.

Acts 16:19-22

And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

Acts 16:23-24

Peter witnesses to Cornelius (38*)			●									
James, brother of John, martyred (41–44)				■								
Peter rescued from prison, leaves Jerusalem (44)				●								
Paul's second Jerusalem visit (famine relief) (44–47*)				■								
Paul's first missionary journey (46–47)					■							
Peter and Paul at Jerusalem council (48–49*)					■							
Paul's second missionary journey (48/49–51*)					■							
Claudius expels Jews from Rome (49)					●							
Paul's third missionary journey (52–57*)						■						
Paul ministers in Ephesus (52–55)						■						
Claudius dies; Jews allowed back to Rome (54)						●						
Nero's reign (54–68)							■					







Portion of the Via Egnatia in Philippi
Carole Raddato - <https://www.ancient.eu/image/3058/via-egnatia-in-philippi/>

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“She is described by Luke as “having a pythonic spirit” or being a “pythoness” — that is, a person inspired by Apollo, the Greek deity specially associated with the giving of oracles, who was worshiped as the “Pythian” god at the oracular shrine of Delphi in central Greece. His priestess there was the Pythian prophet *par excellence*; the girl of whom Luke speaks was a very pale reflection of her. This girl’s involuntary utterances were regarded as the voice of a god, and she was thus much in demand by people who wished to have their fortunes told or to receive information or

advice which they believed could be supplied from such a source.

F. F. Bruce, 312

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From this point in the narrative about Philippi, the 'we' disappears until 20:5. It is likely that Paul and Silas alone were arrested and imprisoned, perhaps because they were more clearly Jewish than their companions. Did Luke not accompany them on the next stage of the journey?

Witherington suggests that 'Luke lived in Troas or perhaps Philippi and traveled back and forth between these locations. This would account for the brief "we" passages during the second missionary journey and why they occur just where they do. We would then have to assume that by the time of

the third missionary journey Luke had agreed to travel with the group for a more extended period of time.'

Peterson, 465

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Barrett observes that the marketplace of a Greek city was much more than a place for buying and selling (cf. 17:17): 'it was used for all kinds of public purposes, including judicial purposes'. Here 'the authorities' were found. Witherington suggests that the girl's owners 'should probably be seen as persons of considerable social status in the community, for it was normally only people of considerable financial wherewithal who would take the risk of going to court with the expectation of winning'.

Peterson, 465

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Moreover, the men who had infringed these rights were not Roman citizens (or so they thought); they were not even Greeks, like the population around them, but wandering Jews, engaged in propagating some variety of their own perverse superstition.

F. F. Bruce, 314

Officially the Roman citizen may not practise any alien cult that has not received the public sanction of the state, but customarily he might do so as long as his cult did not otherwise offend against the laws and usages of Roman life, *i.e.* so long as it did not involve political or social crimes.

John Stott, 266 (quoting Sherwin-White)

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As Philippi was a Roman colony, its municipal administration, like that of Rome itself, was in the hands of two collegiate magistrates. The collegiate magistrates of a Roman colony were commonly called duumvirs, but in some places they preferred the more dignified title of praetors, and this is what the chief magistrates of Philippi were apparently called.

F. F. Bruce, 314

Before the two praetors, then, Paul and Silas were dragged, and their accusers represented them as vagabond Jews who were causing disturbances in the city and inculcating customs which Roman citizens of all people could neither admit nor practice. Proselytization of Roman citizens by Jews was not positively illegal, so far as the evidence indicates, but it certainly incurred strong disapproval.

F. F. Bruce, 314

The magistrates were bound in any case to take cognizance of such religious activity as threatened to provoke a breach of the peace or to encourage unlawful practices or organizations; and Paul and Silas were charged with precisely this kind of activity.

F. F. Bruce, 314

There was great indignation that Roman citizens should be molested by strolling peddlers of an outlandish religion. Such people had to be taught to know their proper place and not trouble their betters. There was no serious investigation of the charge: Paul and Silas were summarily stripped and handed over to the lictors — the magistrates' police attendants — to be soundly beaten; the city jailer was then ordered to lock them up.

F. F. Bruce, 314-315

The lictors were the official attendants on the chief magistrates in Rome and other Roman cities. They carried as symbols of office bundles of rods, with an axe inserted among them in certain circumstances — the *fasces et secures* — denoting the magistrates' right to inflict corporal and, where necessary, capital punishment.

F. F. Bruce, 315

59. It is part from the adoption of such a bundle of rods as the symbol of the Italian political party after World War I that the political term “fascist” is derived.

It was with the lictors' rods that the two missionaries were beaten on this occasion. It was not the only time that Paul had this treatment meted out to him: five or six years later he claims to have been beaten with rods three times (2 Cor. 11:25), although we have no [other] information about the two other occasions.

F. F. Bruce, 315

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Head of Libertas, and on the reverse a consul flanked by two lictors on a denarius
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lictor>



A Lictor is sent to arrest Publius Volero (The Comic History of Rome by Gilbert Abbott à Beckett.)
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lictor>

And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

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It was not the jailer's business to take any thought for his prisoners' comfort, but to make sure that they did not escape. He was possibly a retired soldier, and while service in the Roman army developed many fine qualities, these did not include the milk of human kindness.

F. F. Bruce, 315



<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stocks>

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