ACTS 16

Come Over to Macedonia and Help Us

a young man named Timothy, two closed doors, a call across the sea, and three people set free in Philippi

> *"They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.""*
> ACTS 16:31

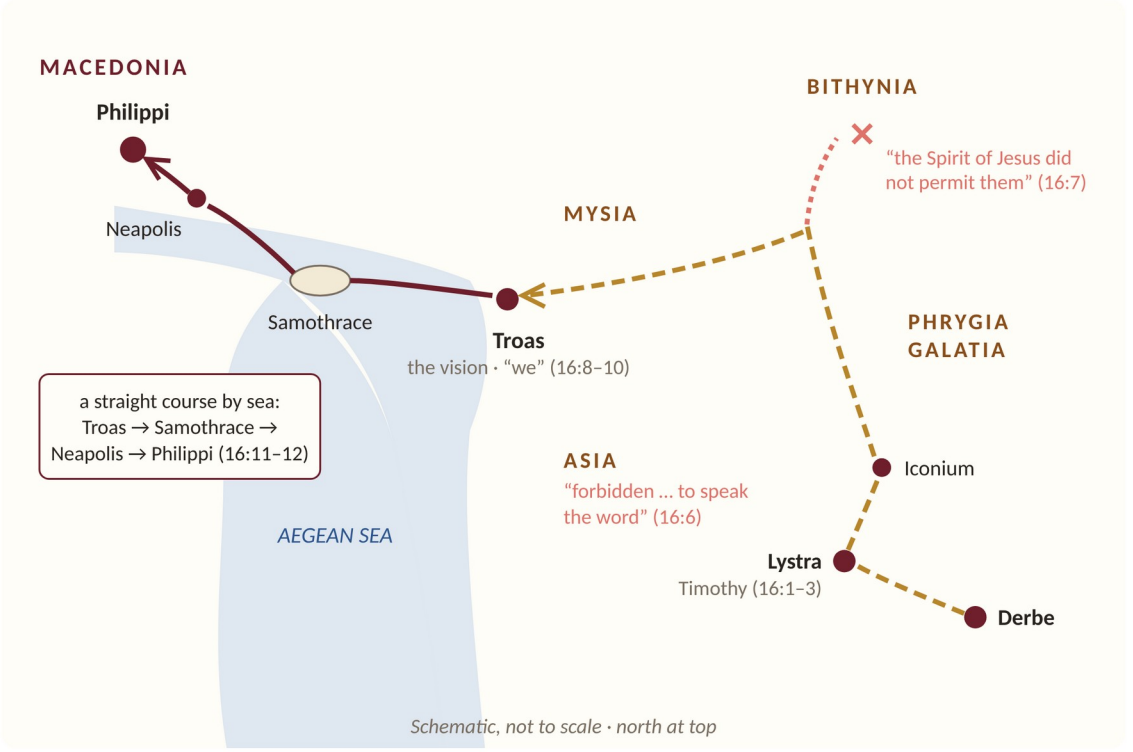
A SMITH FOR CHRIST STUDY · FOUR VOICES: GUZIK · SPROUL · SPURGEON · HENRY

Where Luke has brought us

1. Acts 15 ended with a parting.

2. Then the plan runs out. Twice the Spirit closes a door — no preaching in Asia, no entry into Bithynia — and the team ends up at Troas on the coast of the Aegean Sea.

3. Philippi was “a leading city of the district of Macedonia, a Roman colony” (v12) — a little Rome on Greek soil, proud of its citizens and their customs (v21).



A Disciple Named Timothy

A new partner from Lystra, a hard decision for the sake of the Jews, and churches growing daily

ACTS 16:5

So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.

DAVID GUZIK

No worker irreplaceable; circumcised for love, not legalism.

MATTHEW HENRY

A spiritual father adopts a son; churches increase daily.

μαρτυρέω
MARTYREŌ · "WELL SPOKEN OF"

To bear witness, testify — the root of our word "martyr."

Come Over to Macedonia

Two doors closed by the Spirit, a vision at Troas, and the gospel called into Europe

ACTS 16:6

They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia;

DAVID GUZIK

Guided by hindrance; God's no gave us Luke's books.

MATTHEW HENRY

Follow providence; obey God's call immediately.

κωλύω

KŌLYŌ · "FORBID, PREVENT"

To hinder, prevent, forbid.

The Lord Opened Her Heart

A place of prayer by the river, a seller of purple, and the first household in Europe

ACTS 16:15

And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

DAVID GUZIK

Pray God to open hearts; the Macedonian man was a woman.

R.C. SPROUL

Regeneration precedes faith — the Lord opens, then she responds.

C.H. SPURGEON

Her heart opened to listen, to desire, to believe.

MATTHEW HENRY

Conversion-work is heart-work; religion directs our business.

διανοίγω
DIANOIGŌ · "OPENED"

To open completely, open through — the compound of anoigō with dia.

A Slave-Girl Set Free, Two Men in Stocks

A spirit cast out, a business ruined, and the missionaries beaten and jailed

ACTS 16:16

It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling.

DAVID GUZIK

No need for demonic approval; profit lost, beating given.

MATTHEW HENRY

The love of money is the root; Rome jealous of new religion.

Πύθων

PYTHŌN · "DIVINATION (PYTHON)"

Literally, the girl had "a spirit, a python" — the interlinear reads "of Python."

Believe in the Lord Jesus

Songs at midnight, an earthquake, a sword drawn — and a jailer's question answered

ACTS 16:25

But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them;

DAVID GUZIK

Courageous praise; grace alone, through faith alone.

R.C. SPROUL

(sermon summary) God brings men to the end of themselves.

C.H. SPURGEON

Converted, baptized, useful and joyful — all at once.

MATTHEW HENRY

No place amiss for prayer; companions in suffering pray.

ὑμνέω

HYMNEŌ · "SINGING HYMNS OF PRAISE"

To sing a hymn, to praise in song.

One night in the prison



Follow the six panels across one night, then look at the bottom band: the same hands that fastened the stocks wash the wounds.

Let Them Come Themselves

Paul claims his Roman rights, the magistrates apologize, and the church is encouraged

ACTS 16:37

But Paul said to them, "They have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out."

DAVID GUZIK

Lay down rights for others — or use them for the church.

MATTHEW HENRY

Not honour but justice; clear the gospel's name.

ῥαβδίζω

RHABDIZŌ · "BEAT WITH RODS"

From rhabdos, a rod. The chief magistrates of a Roman colony were attended by lictors carrying bundles of rods — the "policemen" of verses 35 and 38.

Three set free in Philippi

THREE PEOPLE SET FREE IN PHILIPPI · ACTS 16:13–34

	LYDIA vv13–15	THE SLAVE-GIRL vv16–18	THE JAILER vv23–34
WHO	a seller of purple from Thyatira; free, well-off, devout	owned by masters; a spirit of divination made them money	a Roman officer under orders; his life for the prisoners
HOW REACHED	"the Lord opened her heart" while she listened	"I command you in the name of Jesus Christ"	songs at midnight, an earthquake, and his question
WHAT FOLLOWED	baptized with her household; opens her home	the spirit leaves at once; Luke tells us nothing more	believes, is baptized with his household, and rejoices

A businesswoman, a slave and a jailer — rich, owned and official — and one Lord for them all.

Read each column down: three very different people, three different ways Jesus reached them — and Luke tells us how each story ended, or that he does not.

What to carry from this chapter

1

Love bends where the gospel cannot.

Paul circumcised Timothy (v3) while carrying a decree that Gentiles need not be (v4).

2

A good report from two churches.

Timothy “was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium” (v2).

3

Guided by hindrance.

Two closed doors (vv6–7) and one vision (v9).

4

The Lord opened; she responded.

Luke’s order in v14 is the order of grace.

More to carry

5

Pray before you speak.

Guzik: “a most important element in evangelism is asking God through prayer to open hearts.”

6

True words from a wrong source.

The girl’s cry was accurate (v17), but Paul refused a demon’s endorsement.

7

Follow the money.

Her masters cared nothing for her freedom; “their hope of profit was gone” (v19).

8

Midnight songs reach prisoners.

“The prisoners were listening to them” (v25).

Talk it through

1. Timothy was “well spoken of by the brethren” in two towns. What would the men who know me best say about my walk with Christ?

2. Where has God shut a door on me lately? How might that “no” be guiding me toward something He has prepared?

3. The Lord opened Lydia’s heart while Paul spoke. Whose heart am I praying for God to open — and am I speaking to him?

4. The slave-girl’s masters cared about profit, not her freedom. Where do I treat people as useful to me rather than as souls Christ wants to free?

5. Paul and Silas sang in the stocks at midnight. What is my “midnight” right now, and what would praise in it look like?

CLOSING

Acts 16 is a chapter of doors — doors the Spirit shuts, a heart the Lord opens, prison doors an earthquake throws wide. Through all of them the gospel crosses into Europe and frees a businesswoman, a slave and a jailer. If you are in a dark place tonight, sing; if you are asking the jailer's question, the answer has not changed: believe in the Lord Jesus.

Teaching the Word. Watching the Times. — Smith For Christ

Full Deep Dive, O·I·A study and reflection journal: see the Acts study page.