

RUSSELL SANDERS

7-22-2021

THE APOSTLE PAUL – LESSON 21

SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY – PART 7

IN THE PHILIPPIAN JAIL

Paul cast out the spirit of python from the sooth-saying fortune telling damsel (Acts 16:18-24.) causing certain men in this Roman colony of Philippi to lose a significant amount of income they made off her abilities. This made them as mad as hornets.

The men brought Paul and Silas to the city magistrates (judges) and accused them of teaching customs that violated Roman law. A multitude of other people also came against them and angered the magistrates so as to tear the clothes off Paul and Silas and beat them with whips. They cast them into prison in care of the jailer. It was the deeper “inner” prison, the most secure part where they worst of the worst were kept. Their hands and feet were bound in stocks making it impossible to move around.

Despite these worst of circumstances, Paul and Silas had no fear; they had a secret. As students of the scriptures, they knew the written word of God and its power. They may have even recalled Psalm 149:5-6 which said, ***“Let the saints be joyful in glory. Let them sing aloud...let the high praises of God be in their mouth and a two-edged sword in their hand.”*** They began at midnight to pray and sing praises (Acts 16:25-29) so loudly that all the prisoners heard them. Then something miraculous happened.

Suddenly the earth began to quake so greatly as to shake the foundations of the jail. Paul and Silas were freed from the stocks and all the prisoners’ bands were loosed. The doors to the jail and all its compartments were flung open.

The jailer had been sleeping, an offense worthy of death if he were caught. The earthquake awoke him. Upon seeing all the doors open, he immediately assumed all the prisoners had escaped. Knowing that he would be executed, he chose the more “honorable” mode of death by drawing his sword to kill himself.

Paul cried out to the jailer to not harm himself because nobody had escaped. Everyone was still present, which was remarkable in itself. The jailer got a light, entered into the prison, and with fear and trembling he fell down at the feet of Paul and Silas. He knew that he owed his life to them, for what had taken place was impossible.

Tomorrow we shall see what came out of this incident.