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THE APOSTLE PAUL – LESSON 20

SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY PART 6

PAUL ENCOUNTERS PYTHON

Acts 16:16-18 tells of a remarkable incident encountered by Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke as they went to the riverside every day for prayer. A young woman was drawn to them. She was possessed with a demonic spirit of divination. The spirit in her knew exactly who these men were and spoke through her saying in verse 17, ***“These men are servants of the Most High God, which show us the way to salvation.”*** She continued this day after day.

Paul eventually grew weary of it. Being grieved in his spirit, he turned one day and said to the spirit within her (not to the woman herself), ***“I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.”*** The demon came out and she was set free from demon possession that day.

This caused such an uproar that Paul and Silas ended up being cast into jail over it. Let us examine why that was the case. Who really was this damsel? What impact did she have on those around her? Where did her supernatural powers come from?

The Greek word in verse 16 for “spirit of divination” is “Puthon”, which in English is “Python.” We hear much teaching today on the spirit of python, an extremely strong demon spirit.

How did this spirit work in this particular woman? Puthon was a region that included Delphi, the location of the temple to the Greek and Roman god Apollo, the sun god, along with other attributed roles. Delphi was a place where people sought answers to life’s questions, and they would be answered in an oracle. An oracle was considered to be an answer given directly from their pagan god and spoken orally by a pagan priest, priestess, or other specially gifted person.

With Puthon being associated with Delphi, hence with Apollo, it is presumed that this spirit of python is giving words from the divine (pagan) Apollo, by a spirit of divination or fortune telling.

This young woman had this unique spiritual “ability” (from the dark side.) She served certain wealthy men of Philippi who charged people money to come “get a word” or an “oracle” from her.

Once Paul had cast out python, she no longer had that ability. Her “masters” were infuriated by their loss of income. We shall see tomorrow what happened from it.

A lesson to remember here is that the demons know who are the truly righteous persons in their relationship with God. They know those that walk in God’s authority and have to respect that authority. Sadly, they encounter very few of these kinds of people.

They also know which professing believers have unrepented sin in their life. They do not respect such a person (the majority, sadly). They know that those people lack authority to claim the blood and name of Jesus against them. They have no fear of such “believers.”

We must make sure daily that we are spiritually clean. I John 1:9 is written to the believer (not to the unsaved), ***“If we confess our sins, He is faithful...to forgive us...and to cleanse us...”*** Then no demon can withstand us “in Jesus’ name.”