



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Requiring Respect from Lawless Leaders

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Acts 16:35-40 *“So becoming daylight, the generals sent the officers (rod-holders) saying: ‘Release those men.’ 36) So the Jailer announced these words to Paul, that ‘The generals have sent in order that ye may be released. Now therefore, departing, go in peace.’ 37) But Paul said to them, ‘Having beaten (flayed) us publically uncondemned men, being Romans, they threw us into prison! And now secretly they expel us? No indeed, but instead let they themselves come and escort us out.’ 38) Thus the officers (rod-holders) reported these words to the generals. So hearing that they were Romans, they were afraid. 39) And coming, they comforted them, and escorting them out, they continually requested for them to depart from the city. 40) So, going out from the prison, they entered into the house of Lydia, and seeing (everyone), they comforted the brethren and departed.”*

“THE ONLY REMAINING SUPPOSITION SEEMS TO BE, THAT PAUL INTENTIONALLY SUFFERED HIS OWN RIGHTS AND PERSON TO BE OUTRAGED, IN ORDER TO SECURE A GREATER GOOD THAN MERE EXEMPTION FROM DISGRACE AND SUFFERING, NOT ONLY BY ADMONISHING THE MAGISTRATES TO SHUN THE REPETITION OF THEIR ERROR, BUT BY SO DEPARTING FROM PHILIPPI AS TO LEAVE THE INFANT CHURCH UNDER THE PROTECTION OF THE LAWS AND IN POSSESSION OF THE POPULAR RESPECT.”

J. A. ALEXANDER

Why do the generals want to get rid of Paul and Silas at the crack of dawn? Was the jailer happy that Paul and Silas were to be released and would not suffer any more from the generals? What is the Christian salutation the Jailer gives them? How many violations of the Roman law did these generals commit? Have the generals just risked the freedom of their city? Does Paul and Silas now have favor with these generals?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- MARCH 1: ACTS 17:1-4 *REVIVAL IN THE CAPITAL: A MULTITUDE BELIEVES!*
- MARCH 8: SELECTED SCRIPTURES: *PASTOR RICH RYAN WILL BE TEACHING THE BIBLE STUDY*

Paul and Silas have had one of the most painful yet powerful days of their lives. In response to a fortune-telling slave girl constantly crying out for many days, “*These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation,*” Paul had driven out her demon. With primarily false accusations her slave owners begin a riot and drag Paul and Silas before the generals leading the city. The generals respond by ripping the clothes off Paul and Silas and beating them mercilessly in the city square and throwing them in maximum security in prison. This spiritual seal team responded with singing psalms and praising God in prayer in the midst of their affliction. At midnight, God responded with a “*great earthquake*” that released the prisoners and opened the doors of the prison. The jailer suspects his inmates have fled and is about to commit suicide when Paul’s shout relieves his fears and brings him bowing before them asking, “*Lords, what is necessary for me to do in order that I might be saved?*” So they said, *‘Believe on the Lord Jesus and you shall be saved and your household.’ And they spoke to him the Word of God with all the ones in his house.”* The jailer believes and the first thing he wants to do is wash the stripes of Paul and Silas and be baptized with his believing family. Then they spread a table before these hungry missionaries who seized every moment for the Kingdom of God. They rejoiced together that God had turned a possible suicide into salvation for all the family.

“BUT I WANT YOU TO KNOW, BRETHREN, THAT THE THINGS WHICH HAPPENED TO ME HAVE ACTUALLY TURNED OUT FOR THE FURTHERANCE OF THE GOSPEL.”

PHILIPPIANS 1:12

BIBLE STUDIES

THURSDAY @ 6:30 AM –PRAYER MEETING – GAB 6TH FLOOR SPEAKER’S CONFERENCE ROOM

THURSDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – GAB 6TH FLOOR SPEAKER’S CONFERENCE ROOM

Virginia

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I. THE SECRET SOLUTION

ACTS 16:35-36

Just before dawn, Paul and Silas have probably returned to the darkness of the prison to catch some much needed sleep. Suddenly they are awakened by the voices of the men who had most likely beaten them the previous day, now telling the jailer to “*release those men.*” The beating without trial had probably caused the generals to investigate further into the details of the accusations of Paul and Silas once the tumult was over and they soon realized that they had done these traveling missionaries a grave injustice. The earthquake added to their fears that they had provoked God Himself. So, as early as possible, before the sleeping city awakened, they wanted to get Paul and Silas out of town as secretly as possible, to be rid of their mistake. The newly converted jailer was excited to hear that there would be no further affliction for his friends, so he announced the good news of their release to Paul with the Christian equivalent of “Shalom,” “*go in peace.*” He must have been surprised to hear that Paul wanted to discuss things further with the officers who had mercilessly beaten them the previous day.

“THEY NO DOUBT HOPED THAT THE CHASTENED MISSIONARIES WOULD QUIETLY LIMP OUT OF TOWN. PAUL, HOWEVER HAD OTHER IDEAS.”
JOHN MACARTHUR

II. THE STRATEGIC SUMMONS

ACTS 16:37-38

Paul begins to enumerate the tyranny that has been committed against him, “*Having beaten us publically, uncondemned men.*” And then Paul arouses their greatest fear when he speaks of their citizenship as “*being Romans.*” To add to their public humiliation, their public beating, and their lack of any trial he states a final public injustice, “*they threw us into prison.*” In seeking to please the people, the generals responsible for administering justice, had believed the lies of Paul’s accusers and had become the criminals, not only according to biblical law,

but even in regard to Roman law. Recently the Emperor Claudius had taken away the freedom of the city of Rhodes for having treated Roman citizens with injustice. Paul continued, “*and now secretly they expel us? No indeed, but instead let they themselves come and escort us out.*” This summons of the generals would publicly exonerate Paul and Silas and especially the name of Christ, and would protect Lydia and the church from the lies of the greedy slaveholders in the future. It doesn’t take long for the officers to report this Roman citizenship to the generals and suddenly they are alarmed and willing to do whatever Paul required immediately, realizing their own danger.

“ABOUT 5 PERCENT OF THE PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE EMPIRE HAD CITIZENSHIP, WHICH AFFORDED THE PRIVILEGE OF PROTECTION UNDER THE ROMAN LAW AND THE ROMAN ARMY.” JOHN-MICHAEL WONG

III. THE SAGACIOUS SEND-OFF

ACTS 16:39-40

Now, having favor with the generals, they personally come to comfort and console the missionaries, probably apologizing for their illegal behavior. They provide the full honorary escort that Paul required of them, proving to the entire city that Paul and Silas had been innocent of the charges laid against them and also proving that the slave owners had lied and that all the stripping, beating and jailing had been completely undeserved and that therefore the entire city was in jeopardy of losing their freedom if Paul and Silas stayed and brought their case against the leaders. So they “*continually requested for them to depart from the city.*” In no hurry to leave, yet compliant with the generals’ wishes, “*they entered into the house of Lydia*” their gracious host. Probably the infant church had prayed for them through the night. The church was comforted by these sacrificial missionaries and then they departed, leaving Dr. Luke to care for this small flock.

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Are you willing to suffer, sacrifice and strategize to provide for and protect the church of Jesus Christ?
- 2) Do you allow yourself to be deceived by lies so that your leadership increases injustice to those around you?
- 3) Is secrecy used to compound injustice around you or are you bold to tell the truth and further Christ’s kingdom?