

**Valley Bible Church**  
**Sermon Notes for December 27, 2015**

**The Capture of Paul**  
**Acts 16:16-24**

Acts 15:36-18:23 records Paul's second missionary journey and Acts 16:16-40 describes the salvation of jailer in Philippi.

**1. Paul annoyed by the minion (16:16-18)**

The place of prayer was the meeting of the Jewish women by the Gangities River (Acts 16:13). The slave girl was afflicted (cf. Luke 7:21) by a spirit of divination which literally translated is "python spirit." The python was representative of the Greek god Apollo, who is said to have slayed a python that guarded the oracle of Delphi. This evil spirit was connected to the Greek religion and opposed the truth and Paul.

The Greek compound word translated "following after" indicates some distance between the slave girl and Paul, which explains her screaming as well as why this could continue for many days.

The phrase "Most High God" is biblical, referencing the one true God (Hebrews 7:1). In addition, this phrase would be understood by the Greeks as simply referring to a god that is higher than the other gods. This is an example of using biblical words to confuse biblical truth.

Paul's annoyance was more about being disturbed by the effect the demon was having upon the ministry, rather than any personal impatience on his part. Waiting for many days before casting out the demon likely came from his awareness of the consequences that might happen.

Evil spirits serve to confuse the teaching of the word of God (1 Timothy 4:1-3). While Paul cast out the demon in this instance, he instructed us to oppose deceitful spirits through the instruction of the word of God (1 Timothy 4:4-16).

**2. Paul accused by the masters (16:19-21)**

Paul and Silas are seized because unlike Timothy and Luke, they are ethnically Jewish (16:20). The Roman emperor Claudius had expelled the Jews from Rome and anti-Semitism was high in the Roman Empire (Acts 18:2).

While it was against Roman law to proclaim an unapproved religion, it was the masters who created the disturbance when their hope for money was taken. There is a lot of money made today in declaring what will happen in the future

### **3. Paul attacked by the magistrates (16:22-24)**

The mob valued the fortunetelling and joined the masters against Paul. As a Roman colony, Philippi was run by two magistrates who had police--literally "rod-bearers"-- to enforce their edicts (cf. 16:35). This form of justice was common in ancient times and this is one of three occasions when Paul was beaten with rods (2 Corinthians 11:25).

Roman law prohibited Roman citizens such as Paul from being scourged without appeal (cf. Acts 16:37; 22:28) but this was ignored. Paul followed in the steps of Jesus in suffering a false accusation, a mob uprising, an unjust trial and unwarranted abuse.

The jailer in Philippi is noted because he would later believe in the Lord Jesus (16:31-33). He would have been a retired soldier, at least a centurion. The secure inner prison was for dangerous criminals and the despised. The stocks were not only for security but also served as a lesser form of torture.

Being stripped, beaten with rods, imprisoned in stocks, and being over 1,000 miles from their home base in Antioch, was a bleak situation.

May we walk by faith, patiently waiting for the Lord's deliverance from whatever situation we may face.