





## Teaching Points

Distribute copies of Copymaster 1 as background information for this study of Philippians.

Point out the locations of Troas and Philippi as you mention these two cities.

## THE APOSTLE PAUL

(Acts 16:6-12)

God used the Apostle Paul to found the Philippian church; and He did so in an intriguing manner. Philippi was in Macedonia, Europe, across the Aegean Sea from Asia Minor, where Paul was ministering. It was Paul's second missionary journey, and he and his team members, Timothy and Silas, had been trying to push east, into Asia. However, their attempts had been disallowed by God (vv. 6-7). At Troas, a seaport on the west coast of Asia Minor, they learned why God had closed the door to Asia (v. 8).

During the night, Paul had a vision. A man of Macedonia appeared in the vision and urged, "Come over into Macedonia, and help us" (v. 9). Paul and his team, which now included Luke, promptly sailed to Macedonia. They docked at Neapolis (vv. 10-11), then journeyed 10 miles to Philippi (v. 12).

**Discussion:** How did Paul's journey west to Europe, instead of east to Asia, affect world history?

**Discussion:** How can churches respond better to the needs of missionaries?

Paul was not a male chauvinist. He understood that women play an essential role in God's programs of evangelism and discipleship. Romans 16 includes many female names among those whom Paul greeted and commended.

## LYDIA

(Acts 16:13-15)

The Jewish population at Philippi must have been paltry, because only 10n male Jews were required for the establishment of a synagogue, and no synagogue existed at Philippi. However, several devout women observed sabbath prayers beside the city's Gangites River. When Paul and his team spoke at this outdoor prayer meeting, Lydia, a seller of purple cloth, responded with an open heart (vv. 13-14).

Lydia quickly demonstrated her faith in Christ by obeying the Lord in baptism. Verse 15 reports that the members of her household were baptized too. Lydia demonstrated her faith further by opening her home to the missionaries. Soon, her home would become a meeting place for the church at Philippi (v. 40).

**Discussion:** What kinds of actions or questions might indicate that the Lord is opening a person's heart to receive Christ?



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*The jailer believed, was baptized, and fellowshiped with his spiritual family. His spiritual journey began with steps similar to those taken by believers at Pentecost (Acts 2:41-42).*

escape, was asleep; and it took an earthquake to awaken him (v. 26). The earthquake jolted the cell doors open and loosed the prisoners' chains. The jailer assumed that the inmates had escaped and, therefore, prepared to commit suicide, preferring death by his own hand to disgrace and death at the hands of his superiors (v. 27). However, he put his sword aside when Paul shouted, "Do thyself no harm: for we are all here" (v. 28). The jailer fell trembling before Paul and Silas (v. 29). After escorting them from their quarters, he asked them how to be saved (v. 30).

This question must have been music to the missionaries' ears, because they had come to Macedonia to tell as many as possible how to be saved. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved," they exclaimed (v. 31), adding that the jailer's household members, too, could be saved. Then they disclosed the Word of the Lord to him and his household (v. 32).

Having become a believer, the jailer demonstrated Christian love by bathing Paul's and Silas's wounds. Then he and his believing household were baptized (v. 33). The night ended with a joyous fellowship meal provided by the newborn jailer (v. 34).

In the morning, the judges sent officers to the prison to order Paul and Silas's release (v. 35). But Paul suggested that the judges come in person to escort them from the prison. After all, they had treated them unjustly—they were Roman citizens (vv. 36-37). In fear, the judges begged Paul and Silas to leave town (v. 39).

The missionaries first met with, and encouraged, the new believers assembled in Lydia's house, then they departed (v. 40). A young, vibrant church would carry on the work they had begun.

**Discussion:** Paul and Silas prayed and praised in what appeared to be desperate circumstances. How does their example help you?

**Discussion:** After witnessing God's power in the midst of adversity, Paul and Silas encouraged others. What have you learned in adversity that you can use to encourage others?



