

# A SOLDIER BELIEVES

A Philippian Jailer  
Acts 16:16–40

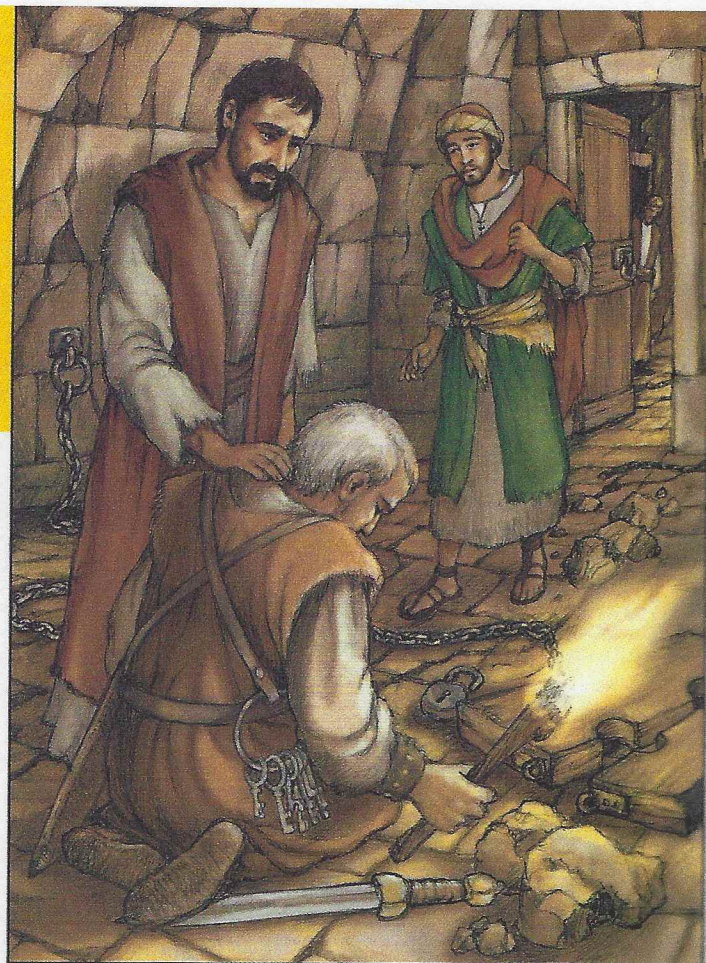
**M**any years later, Saul, who was also known as Paul, was sent by the Church to be a missionary in far away cities. He brought some missionary friends to help him tell people about Jesus.

**Paul and his friend Silas came to a city in Greece called Philippi.** As Paul and Silas shared the Gospel in the city, a slave girl who had a demon followed them around, saying, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.” **Paul turned and said to the demon, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.”** And the demon immediately left her.

The people who owned the slave girl were mad. When she had the demon, they had earned a lot of money from others who wanted her to tell their future. **Now with the demon gone, they couldn’t make money from her. They grabbed Paul and Silas and dragged them before the judges.**

The judges ordered that they be beaten with rods and put in prison for the night. **But Paul and Silas didn’t sit around feeling sorry for themselves. Around midnight, they were praying and singing in their prison cell, and all the other prisoners were listening. Suddenly, a strong earthquake struck, and all the prison doors opened up and the chains fell off of every prisoner.**

The jailer woke up and got really scared. He saw the jail doors standing open and thought all the prisoners had escaped. Since he thought that he had failed to keep them in jail, he pulled out his sword to kill himself. But Paul shouted that he should not hurt himself, because all the prisoners were still there. The jailer



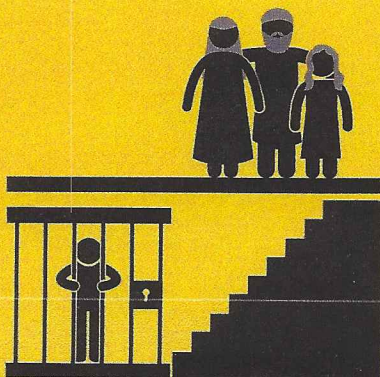
asked for a torch and ran inside to see. **He fell down in front of Paul and Silas and asked what he had to do to be saved.** Paul told him, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.” Then, Paul and Silas told the jailer, his family, and his servants all about Jesus. **They baptized his whole household.**

The next day, the judges sent the police to the jail to let Paul and Silas go. Paul told them that he and Silas had been wrongly beaten and thrown in jail even though they were Roman citizens. He wanted an apology.

**The judges were afraid because they had thrown a Roman citizen in jail when they shouldn’t have.** They came and apologized to Paul and Silas and asked them to leave. Paul and Silas stopped to visit their friend Lydia and to encourage the other Christians there, and then went on their way.

## Doing Time in Bible Times

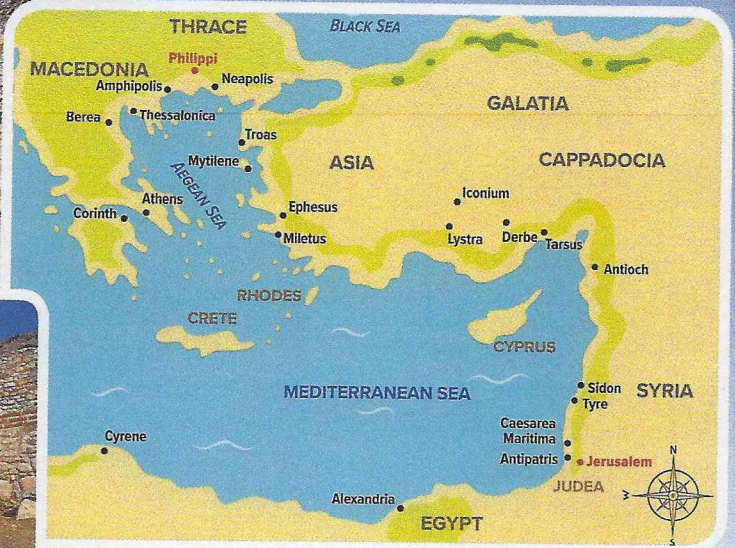
- ▶ Prisons in Bible times were used to hold prisoners prior to trial, not as a form of punishment.
- ▶ Prisoners were chained both hand and foot in their cells.



- ▶ The jailer usually lived in the same building as the prison. Prison cells were on the lower level while the jailer and his family lived on the upper floor.
- ▶ Prisoners depended on friends and family to bring food since meals were not provided by the jail.



## Ruins of the Ancient City of Philippi



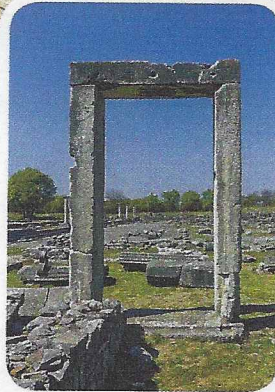
### Paul's Second Missionary Journey

This event is part of Paul's second long trip to spread the Gospel to the world. He started in Jerusalem and traveled through Turkey and to Greece, more than 1,400 miles.

Have you ever taken a car trip that far?

Most of the time Paul and his companions made these trips by walking.

- ▶ Located in Greece.
- ▶ Busy commercial city on the route along the coast going to Rome.
- ▶ Did not have very many Jews or a synagogue.
- ▶ Across the known world from Israel. (The average person living in Jerusalem would never have gone to Philippi.)
- ▶ Roman colony where many Roman soldiers lived after they left the military (so being a Roman citizen was a big deal there).
- ▶ Leading city of its day and nice place to live.



### THE JAILER

He and his family most likely lived above the jail. The rules said that if your prisoner escaped then your punishment was death.

Because Paul, Silas, and the other prisoners didn't leave the prison, they saved the jailer's life. By telling the jailer about Jesus and baptizing him, Paul saved the jailer's eternal life.



### Bible Verse: Acts 2:38

Be baptized . . . in the name of Jesus.

### Scripture Connections

Read these additional Scripture passages about Baptism.

▶ Acts 11:16

▶ Romans 6:3–4

▶ Acts 16:15



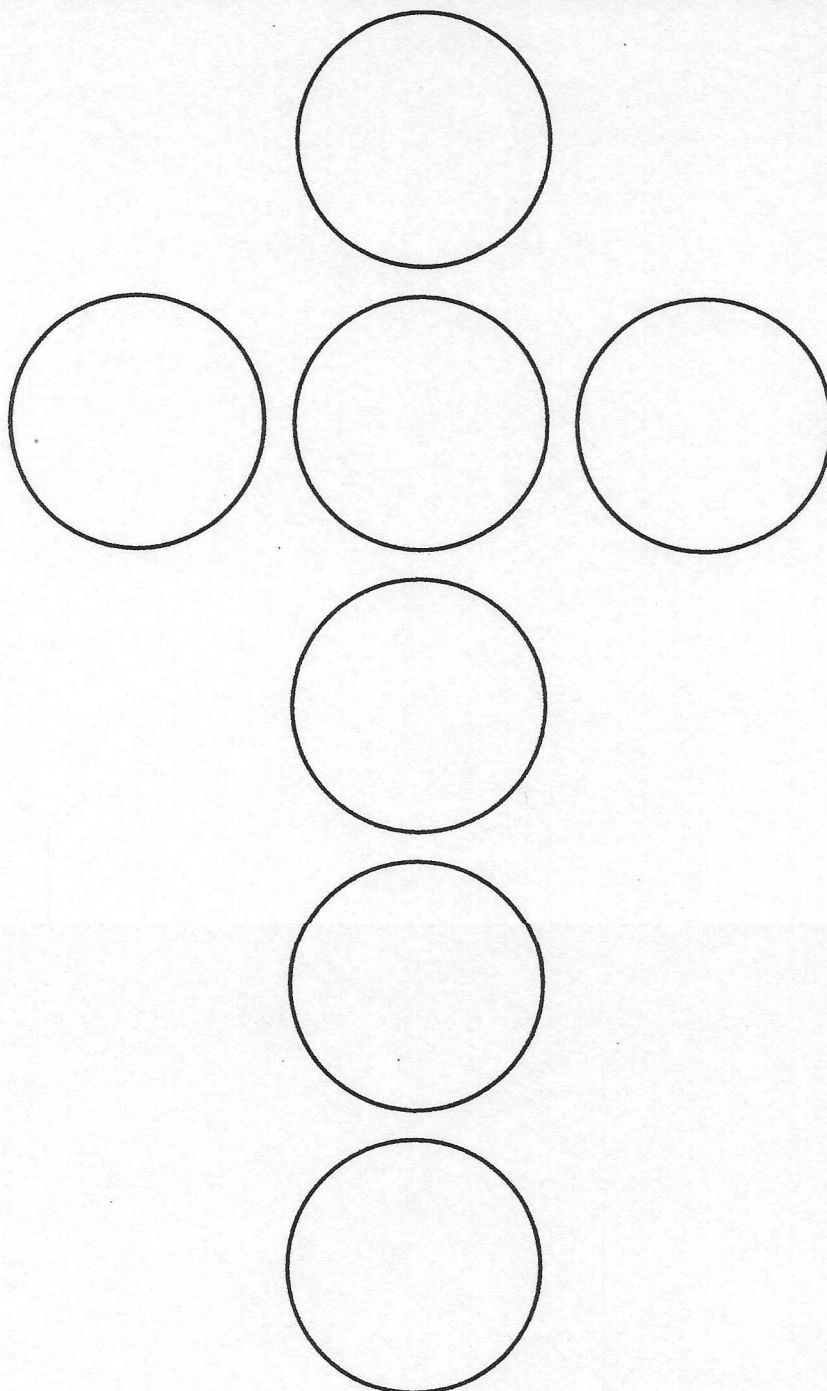
## A SOLDIER BELIEVES—A PHILIPPIAN JAILER

### Unit 3, Lesson 13

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#### From Fear to Joy

**Directions:** In the top circle, draw a picture or write a few words that tell why the jailer in Philippi was afraid. In the other circles, draw pictures or write a few words to describe things people your age fear.



Now draw a vertical line through the five circles from the top to the bottom. Then draw a horizontal line through the three circles from the left side to the right side. What shape have you made?

Paul and Silas told the jailer, **“Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved, you and your household”** (Acts 16:31). As baptized children of God, why do we have nothing to fear?