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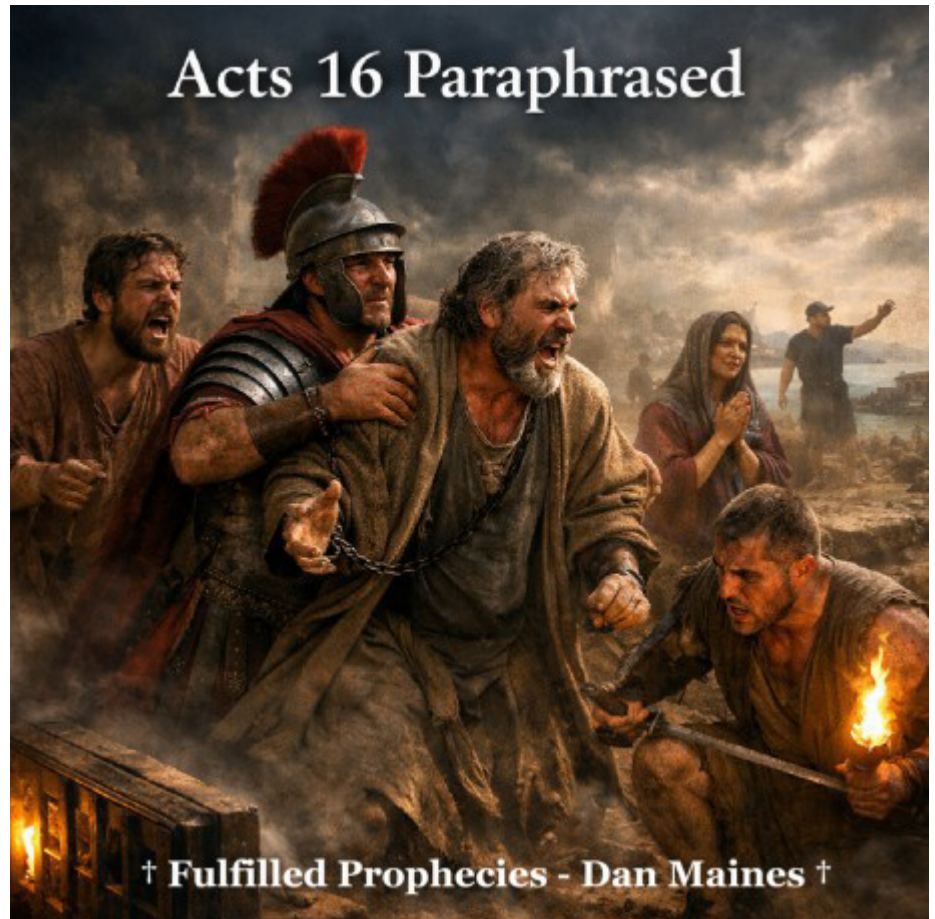
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Acts 16 Paraphrased



By Dan Maines

Acts 16 Paraphrased

Introduction

† This chapter shows the Spirit directing the gospel beyond Israel into the Gentile world

† It reveals how God opens hearts and establishes His church

† It shows that not every path is God's will, He leads by closing and opening doors

† It demonstrates how suffering and deliverance work together for the gospel

† It confirms the kingdom was actively advancing in their

generation

Acts 16:1

Paul traveled to Derbe and Lystra, where he met a disciple named Timothy, the son of a believing Jewish woman but a Greek father

† Timothy was already a disciple before Paul arrived, showing the gospel had already taken root from earlier ministry in that region

† His mixed background reflects the union of Jew and Gentile, which matches the expansion taking place in this chapter

† This shows the shift from temple-centered religion to faith established within households and families

Acts 16:2

The brothers in Lystra and Iconium spoke well of him

† This shows Timothy had a consistent reputation across multiple cities, not just a local opinion

† The early church recognized proven character, not just knowledge or words

† This reflects the pattern later taught, that leaders must be tested and known

Acts 16:3

Paul wanted Timothy to travel with him, so he circumcised him because of the Jews in that area, since they all knew his father was Greek

† This was not for salvation, since that had already been settled, but to remove unnecessary offense

† Paul adjusted outwardly without compromising the truth of the gospel

† This shows the mission comes first, removing barriers so people can hear

Acts 16:4

As they traveled through the cities, they delivered the decisions from the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for them to follow

† This established unity across all churches with the same teaching

† It prevented confusion about the Law and Gentile inclusion

† This shows the importance of consistent doctrine

Acts 16:5

So the churches were strengthened in the faith and increased in number daily

† Strength came from clarity and truth, not confusion

† Growth followed when the message was clear

† Unity produced stability and increase

Acts 16:6

They passed through Phrygia and Galatia, having been prevented by the Holy Spirit from speaking the word in Asia

† The Spirit actively guided where they were allowed to go

† Being prevented shows God controls timing and direction

† Not every open door is God's will

Acts 16:7

They came to Mysia and tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them

† Jesus continued directing His people after His ascension

† Multiple closed doors were part of God's plan

† Obedience meant accepting redirection

Acts 16:8

Passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas

† They continued moving even without full understanding

† God was positioning them for the next step

† Direction often comes progressively

Acts 16:9

A vision appeared to Paul in the night, a man of Macedonia was

standing and urging him to come over and help us

† God revealed the next step clearly after closing other paths

† This marked the gospel moving into new territory

† The nations were ready to receive the message

Acts 16:10

After he saw the vision, we immediately sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them

† Their response was immediate, showing trust in God's direction

† Luke joins the account here, marking eyewitness testimony

† They recognized this as a clear calling from God

Acts 16:11

They set sail from Troas and ran straight to Samothrace, and the next day to Neapolis

† The direct route shows God's hand removing obstacles

† The mission moved quickly once direction was clear

† God opened the way fully

Acts 16:12

From there to Philippi, a leading city of that district of Macedonia and a Roman colony, and they stayed there several days

† Philippi was a strategic Roman city with influence

† God places His message in key locations for wider spread

† Their stay shows preparation before ministry

Acts 16:13

On the Sabbath they went outside the gate to a riverside where they expected a place of prayer, and they sat down and spoke to the women gathered there

† There was no synagogue, showing limited Jewish presence

† They sought those already seeking God

† The gospel starts where people are, not ideal conditions

Acts 16:14

A woman named Lydia, a seller of purple cloth from Thyatira, who worshiped God, was listening, and the Lord opened her heart to respond to what Paul was saying

† The Lord opening her heart shows salvation is God's work

† Lydia was a woman of influence, which helped establish the church

† This shows readiness when truth meets an open heart

Acts 16:15

After she and her household were baptized, she urged them to stay at her home

† Her household responded together, showing the reach of the gospel

† Hospitality became the base for the church

† This shows immediate commitment to the faith

Acts 16:16

As they were going to the place of prayer, a slave girl having a spirit of divination met them, bringing her masters much profit

† Spiritual deception was tied to financial gain

† The girl was in bondage both spiritually and physically

† The gospel confronts systems of exploitation

Acts 16:17

She followed Paul and cried out that these men are servants of the Most High God, proclaiming the way of salvation

† The statement was true, but the source was deceptive

† This created confusion rather than clarity

† Not all truth is helpful when coming from a corrupt source

Acts 16:18

She continued for many days, but Paul was troubled and commanded the spirit to come out of her in the name of Jesus

Christ, and it left immediately

† Paul discerned the spirit behind the words

† The authority of Jesus brought immediate deliverance

† This shows complete power over spiritual forces

Acts 16:19

When her masters saw their profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities

† Their true concern was financial loss, not truth

† The gospel disrupted their income source

† This shows how quickly opposition rises when profit is affected

Acts 16:20

They brought them to the magistrates and accused them of causing trouble as Jews

† They used identity to stir prejudice

† The charges were false and exaggerated

† This shows how truth is often twisted

Acts 16:21

They claimed these men were teaching customs unlawful for Romans

† The gospel challenged Roman culture

† Authority felt threatened by change

† Tradition was used to resist truth

Acts 16:22

The crowd rose against them, and the magistrates tore their garments and ordered them to be beaten

† Mob pressure led to unjust punishment

† Authority gave in to public pressure

† This fulfilled Christ's warning of persecution

Acts 16:23

After many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely

† They suffered physically for the gospel

† God still worked through their situation

† Nothing stopped His purpose

Acts 16:24

He placed them in the inner prison and fastened their feet in stocks

† They were placed in maximum security

† There was no natural escape

† Yet God was not limited by conditions

Acts 16:25

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns, and the prisoners were listening

† Worship continued in suffering

† Their faith became a testimony to others

† This shows true faith is not dependent on circumstances

Acts 16:26

Suddenly a great earthquake shook the prison, doors opened, and chains were loosened

† God intervened directly and powerfully

† Chains breaking shows divine authority

† This was both physical and spiritual demonstration

Acts 16:27

The jailer awoke and saw the doors open and was about to kill himself, thinking the prisoners had escaped

† Fear drove him to immediate despair

† Roman law made him responsible with his life

† He believed all was lost

Acts 16:28

Paul cried out not to harm himself because they were all there

- † Mercy replaced judgment
- † Paul stopped him from death
- † This opened the door for salvation

Acts 16:29

He called for lights and rushed in trembling before Paul and Silas

- † The power of God brought fear and conviction
- † He recognized something greater was happening
- † His response was humility

Acts 16:30

He brought them out and asked what must I do to be saved

- † This is the question every person must face
- † Conviction led him to seek truth
- † He knew they had the answer

Acts 16:31

They told him to believe in the Lord Jesus and he would be saved, he and his household

- † Salvation is by faith alone in Christ
- † The promise extends to the household
- † This is the simplicity of the gospel

Acts 16:32

They spoke the word of the Lord to him and all who were in his house

- † Teaching followed belief
- † The whole household received instruction
- † Truth was explained fully

Acts 16:33

He washed their wounds and was baptized along with all his family

- † Faith produced immediate action
- † Baptism followed belief

† His life was visibly changed

Acts 16:34

He brought them into his house, set food before them, and rejoiced greatly

† Joy followed salvation

† Fellowship replaced fear

† His life was transformed

Acts 16:35

When it was day, the magistrates sent word to release them

† The authorities tried to quietly dismiss the situation

† They wanted no further trouble

† But the issue was not resolved

Acts 16:36

The jailer reported they were free to go

† He relayed the message

† He expected peace

† The situation seemed finished

Acts 16:37

Paul said they beat us publicly without trial, Roman citizens, and now send us away secretly, let them come themselves

† Paul exposed the injustice done to them

† He used his rights to bring accountability

† This protected future believers

Acts 16:38

The officers reported this and the magistrates were afraid when they heard they were Roman citizens

† Fear shifted to the authorities

† Roman law now worked in their favor

† The situation reversed

Acts 16:39

They came and apologized and asked them to leave the city

† Authority was forced to acknowledge wrongdoing

† Truth brought accountability

† The gospel exposed corruption

Acts 16:40

They went to Lydia's house, encouraged the brothers, and departed

† The church was established and strengthened

† Believers were encouraged before departure

† The mission continued forward

Historical References

† Josephus records Roman law and citizenship practices, Antiquities of the Jews

† Irenaeus confirms the spread of the gospel into Gentile regions, Against Heresies

† Eusebius documents early expansion into Macedonia, Ecclesiastical History

† Clement of Alexandria records household conversions, Stromata

How it applies to us today

† The Spirit still directs where we go

† Closed doors are part of God's plan

† Worship in trials is powerful

† Salvation is through faith in Christ

† God uses every situation for His purpose

Q & A Appendix

Q: Why was Timothy circumcised

A: To remove a stumbling block, not for salvation (1 Corinthians 9:20)

Q: Why were they redirected

A: God had a specific plan for Macedonia

Q: What does Lydia show

A: God opens hearts (Acts 16:14)

Q: Why did they sing in prison

A: Their faith was not dependent on circumstances (Hebrews 13:15)

Q: What must we do to be saved

A: Believe in the Lord Jesus (Acts 16:31)

† This is the fulfilled perspective we proclaim at Fulfilled Prophecies †

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Source Index

† Acts 16

† Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews

† Irenaeus, Against Heresies

† Eusebius, Ecclesiastical History

† Clement of Alexandria, Stromata

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