

HOME BIBLE STUDY SERIES

*A Study of
Special Conversions
in the
Acts of Apostles (#1)*

- 1 -- Conversion of 3,000 on Pentecost
- 2 -- Conversion of the Ethiopian
Treasurer
- 3 -- Conversion of Saul of Tarsus
- 4 -- Conversion of Cornelius
- 5 -- Conversion of Lydia
- 6 -- Conversion of Philippian Jailer

*Prepared by:
Paul E. Cantrell
84 Northview Drive
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050*

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Lesson One

"Conversion of 3,000 on Pentecost"

(Acts 11-8; 2:1-41)

The Book of Acts primarily concerns itself with the outcome of the preaching of the Gospel throughout the world and giving example after example of conversions and non-conversions of its hearers. Some of the accounts are very brief while others are more involved. These accounts of conversion were selected by the Holy Spirit from the many thousands of conversions to give information mankind would need for all time.

This first lesson deals with the **first** preaching of the Gospel that ushered in the "New Religion" given by Jesus to the whole world (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15). Some 3,000 people were converted when they heard the inspired preaching of the Apostle Peter.

Questions for Study and Discussion

1. What promise did Jesus repeat to the Apostles? (1:4-5; John 16:13)

2. What was the purpose of the coming of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles? (1:8)

3. How many days after the Passover did the Day of Pentecost occur? (2:1; Leviticus 23:15-16)

4. What miraculous event occurred to indicate that the Holy Spirit had come? (2:2-4)

5. What power did the Apostles receive? (2:4)

6. What did Peter state was the fulfillment of the prophet Joel? (2:16-21; Joel 2:28-29)

7. What evidence did Peter use to prove the resurrection of Jesus?
(2:23-32)

8. What was Peter's conclusion about Jesus? (2:36)

9. What were these convicted people told to do to receive the remission of sins? (2:38)

10. Who all were to have this privilege of forgiveness? (2:39)

11. How could they save themselves from that perverse generation?
(2:40)

12. How many were converted (saved) that day? (2:41)

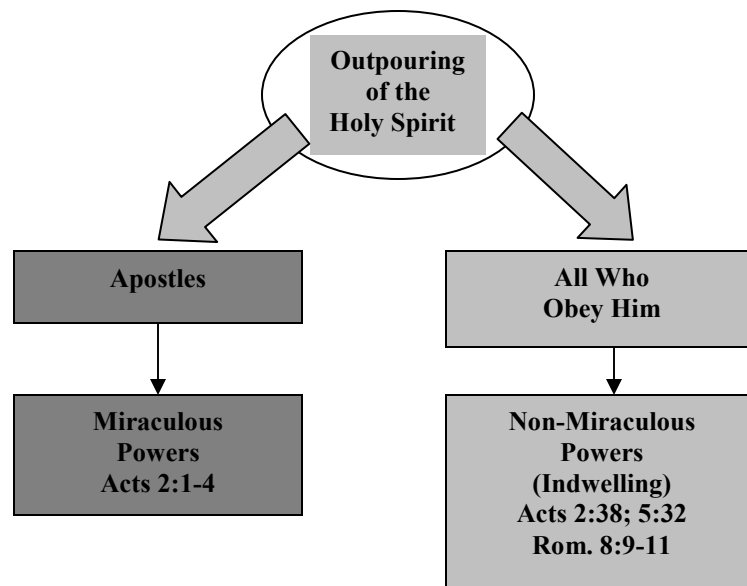
Questions to Challenge your Thinking!

1. Why was it important for the Apostles to receive the "outpouring" of the Holy Spirit?

2. Of what value was the power to speak in tongues to these devout Jews on Pentecost?

3. If "remission of sins" is a gift from God, why were these people told to "repent.....and be baptized" in order to receive God's gift?

Discuss This Chart



1. What made the difference in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit?

2. Why is the "indwelling" of the Holy Spirit called "non-miraculous?"

Lesson Two

"Conversion of the Ethiopian Treasurer"

(Acts 8:26-40)

The Gospel continued to be preached in the city of Jerusalem by the Apostles, as recorded in chapters 3-5. In fact, the Jewish leaders accused them of "**filling Jerusalem**" with their teaching! (Acts 5:28). The outcome of such preaching of the gospel caused great numbers to become disciples (Acts 6:7). This fast growth brought about fear on the part of the Jewish leaders that caused them to begin to persecute the Apostles in order to stop their preaching. When this didn't work, they took greater measures that resulted in the first martyr for the cause of Christ—Stephen (Acts 6-7). Many of the Christians in Jerusalem began to leave and went into the provinces of Judea and Samaria. However, the Apostles did not leave Jerusalem at this time (Acts 8:1). Philip, one of the seven men chosen to see after the Grecian widows, went into Samaria and preached the Gospel that resulted in both men and women (and even Simon the Sorcerer) being baptized into Christ (Acts 8:12-13). The Apostles had laid hands on Philip that gave him the power to perform miraculous signs that helped the Samaritans to know that He was speaking a message from God (Acts 6:6-8; 8:9-12). When the Apostles heard of the reception by the Samaritans, Peter and John were sent to them to lay hands on them to impart the power to do miraculous signs themselves (Acts 8:14-17). Philip was then directed by an Angel to go and teach a man on his way back to Ethiopia. The conversion of this man is our lesson for today.

Questions for Study and Discussion

- 1. Who directed Philip to preach to the Ethiopian Treasurer? (8:26)**
- 2. What is a Eunuch and why were men made such?**
- 3. What book in the Old Testament was the Treasurer reading from? (8:28-33)**
- 4. What was the theme of Philip's preaching? (8:35)**

5. Why did the Treasurer ask to be baptized? (8:36)
6. How was this baptism performed? (8:38-39)
7. Why was the Treasurer able to go on his way rejoicing? (8:39)

Questions to Challenge your Thinking

1. Can we expect the Holy Spirit or an Angel to direct us to people that need to be taught like Philip? (8:26, 29)
2. What was so significant about what the Treasurer was reading from the book of Isaiah? (8:31-35)
3. How do we know that to preach Christ is to also preach baptism? (8:35)
4. How do we know that the Ethiopian was a devout religious man? (8:27-28, 36)
5. How could there be enough water to immerse (baptize) someone when the area is referred to as being desert? (8:26)
6. How do we know that Isaiah was foretelling of the death of Jesus in the verses that the Treasurer was reading? (8:32-35)

7. Why would both Philip and the Treasurer go down into the water if all Philip did was to sprinkle a little water over his head?

8. Why is verse 37 (ch. 8) left out of some translations of the Bible?

9. Is it important for those who want to be baptized to confess their faith in Christ openly? (8:37; Rom. 10:9-10; Matt. 10:32-33)

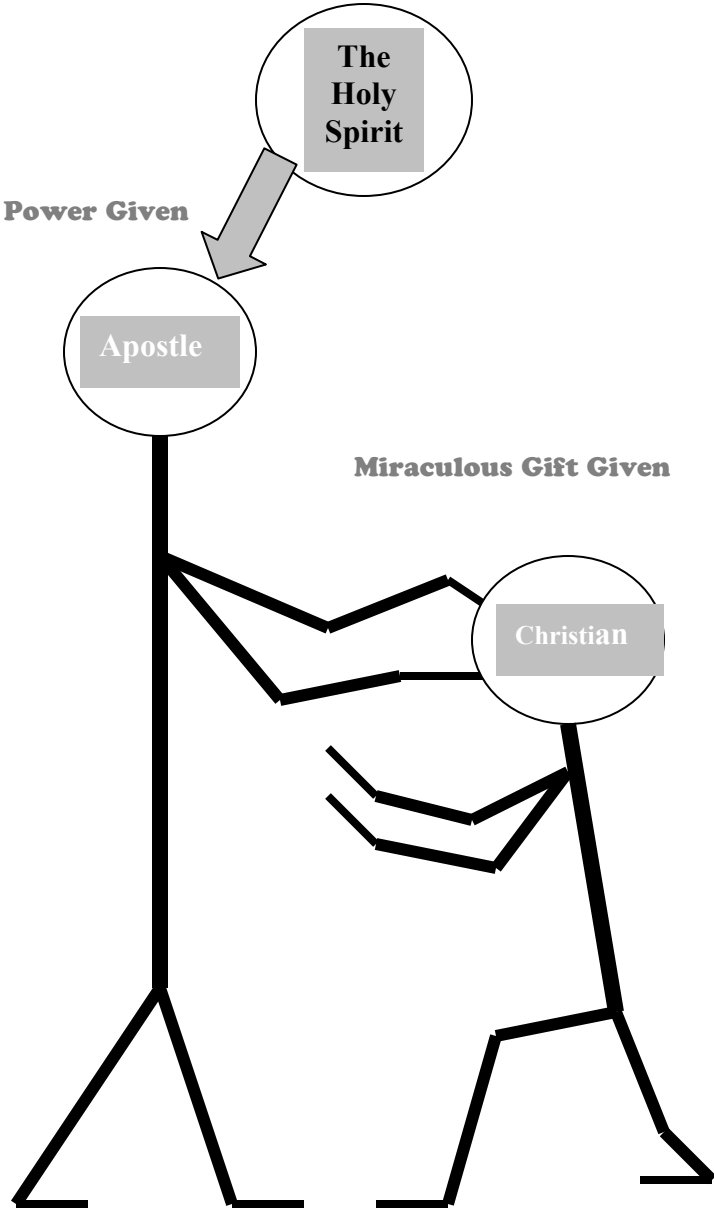
10. Have you seen the importance of your open confession of Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God?

11. Have you shown your faith in the Sacrifice of Christ by being baptized into Christ?

12. Are you willing to undergo persecution for your faith in Christ? (Matt. 5:10-12).

13. Are you like this man who was reading God's Word trying to find some answer for His soul?

Discuss This Chart



Lesson Three

"Conversion of Saul of Tarsus"

(Acts 9:1-18)

While the Gospel was continuing to spread in all directions from Jerusalem, persecution was also increased against the disciples of Jesus. A man by the name of Saul of Tarsus was so intent on persecuting these followers of Jesus that he ***"made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison."*** (Acts 8:3). But he didn't stop there; he also secured letters from the High Priest of the Jews that would give him authority to arrest men or women (even in Damascus of Syria) and bring them bound back to Jerusalem for trial (Acts 9:1-2). At this time, Saul was a relatively young man, but advancing in the Jewish religion rapidly. His home was in Tarsus of Cilicia, but he was taught at the feet of Gamaliel, and taught according to the strictness of the Jewish fathers. His zealotry was obvious by his efforts to persecute those who professed to believe in and follow Jesus of Nazareth (Acts 22:1-5). The Conversion of Saul was a great blessing to him, but a blessing also to the church—since his persecution stopped. This is our lesson for today.

Questions for Study and Discussion

- 1. Why did Saul want to go to the synagogue in Damascus? (9:2)**
- 2. What happened to Saul when he drew near to the city of Damascus? (9:3)**
- 3. When did the above event happen and how bright was the light? (22:13)**
- 4. What did the voice say to Saul? (9:4; 26:14)**

5. Why did Jesus accuse Saul of persecuting Him? (9:5)

6. What answer was given to Saul's question: "*Lord, what do You want me to do?*" (9:6; 22:10; 26:16-18)

7. What happened to Saul's eyesight? (9:8; 22:11)

8. Did the men with Saul hear or see anything? (9:7; 22:9)

9. What did Saul do while he waited for someone to come and tell him what he needed to do? (9:9, 11)

10. What vision did Saul see while he was waiting for someone to come? (9:12)

11. Why was Ananias reluctant to go to help Saul? (9:13-14)

12. Why did the Lord say that He had chosen Saul? (9:15-16; 22:14-15).

13. When did Saul receive his sight back? (9:17-18; 22:13)

14. Why was Saul baptized? (9:18; 22:16)

Questions to Challenge Your Thinking

1. Was Saul saved on the road to Damascus after having seen the Lord? (22:16)

2. How did Saul "call upon the name of the Lord?" (22:16; Rom. 10:13-16; Acts 2:21)

3. How was Saul "filled with the Holy Spirit?" (9:17, 12)

4. Was the Lord a "respector of persons" when He appeared to Saul, but has not appeared to me?

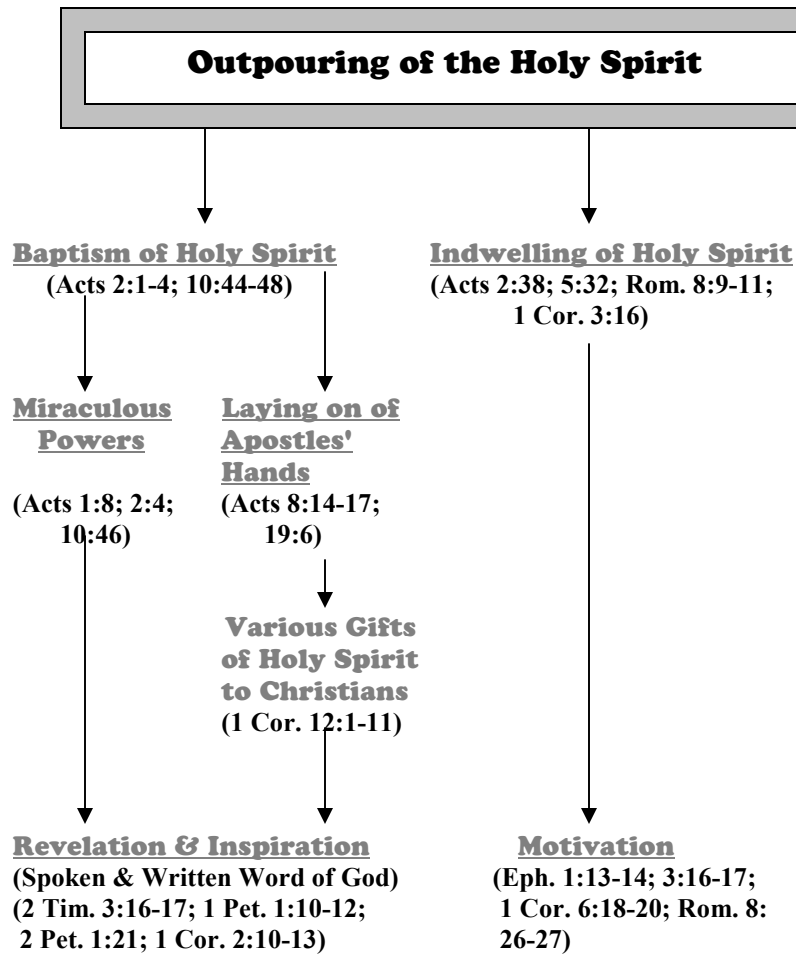
5. Could Ananias lay his hands on people and impart a miraculous gift to another person? (9:17)

6. In what sense did baptism wash away Saul's sins? (22:16)

7. Have you had your sins washed away like Saul?

8. Do you have sins that you need to turn from and be forgiven of?

Discuss This Chart



Lesson Four

"Conversion of Cornelius"

(Acts 10:1-11:18)

Now that the Gospel was being spread to Jews scattered over the world, it was necessary for Gentiles to be given the same opportunity. God chose Peter to be the one to first preach to the Gentiles. It took three miracles to get the preacher and hearers together and to convince the Jewish believers that God wanted the Gentiles to be saved also. They were:

- 1) An Angel appeared to Cornelius and told him to send for Peter;
- 2) Peter was given a vision and told to go with the men inquiring of him;
- 3) The Holy Spirit fell on the household of Cornelius and they spoke in tongues.

It was quite a shock to the Jewish believers that went with Peter, but they concluded correctly that God wanted the Gentiles to be saved as well as the Jews. They were told to do the same thing to be saved as the Jews had been told. With the outpouring of God's Spirit upon the Gentiles here, as it was on Pentecost with the Jews, Joel's prophecy had been completed. Acts 11:1-18 was Peter's report back to the brethren in Jerusalem of what had taken place with the Gentiles. This is our lesson for today.

Questions for Study and Discussion

1. How is Cornelius described? (10:1-2)

2. What did the Angel tell Cornelius to do? (10:3-6)

3. What was Peter's vision and what did it mean? (10:9-16, 34-35)

4. What did the Spirit tell Peter to do? (10:19-20)

5. What had Cornelius done to prepare for Peter's coming? (10:24)

6. What did Cornelius do when Peter came in and what was Peter's response? (10:25-26)

7. What did Cornelius tell Peter that they wanted to hear? (10:33)

8. How is God no respecter of persons? (10:34-35)

9. What was Peter's message to them? (10:36-42)

10. Who should receive remission of sins? (10:43)

11. What unusual event occurred while Peter was preaching? (10:44-46)

12. What did this cause among those believers who came with Peter? (10:45)

13. What miraculous powers were given to the Gentiles from the outpouring of the Holy Spirit? (10:46)

14. What were they commanded to do to be saved? (10:47-48)

15. Who objected to what Peter had done with the Gentiles? (11:1-3)

16. How many Jewish brethren accompanied Peter to the house of Cornelius? (11:12)

17. For what reason had the Angel told Cornelius to send for Peter? (11:13-14)

18. What connection did Peter make when the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles? (11:15-16)

19. What is "the beginning" Peter referred to? (11:15; Acts 2:1-4)

20. What conclusion did they draw from all of this? (11:17-18)

Questions to Challenge Your Thinking

1. Why was it so hard for the Apostles and other Jewish believers in Christ to accept the fact that Gentiles were to be under this New Covenant?

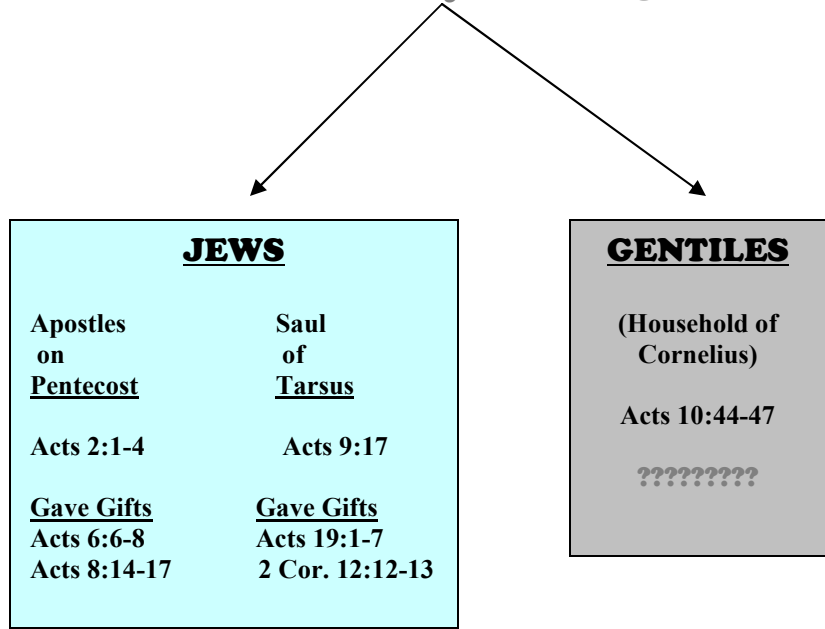
2. Did Cornelius receive the same benefits as the Apostles when the Holy Spirit fell on him? (10:44-47; 8:14-17)

3. Do you have the same attitude as Cornelius in wanting to hear all that God requires of you?

4. Are you expecting some miraculous event to occur before you obey the Gospel?

Discuss This Chart

**Outpouring of the Holy Spirit
upon All Flesh
as Promised by Joel 2:28-32**



*Lesson Five****"Conversion of Lydia"*****(Acts 16:11-15)**

Now that Gentiles are to also come into this new kingdom of God, efforts would soon be made to begin spreading the Gospel message to all the nations (Matt. 28:18-20). Those who taught would usually go first to the Jewish people and Synagogues because of their readiness to accept the preaching of the Messiah (Redeemer); but, many Gentiles had been influenced towards believing in the one true God and in some cases a belief in the coming Redeemer. So, churches were being established that were made up of both Jew and Gentile. Barnabas and later Saul (Paul) worked together at Antioch to help strengthen the church (Acts 11:19-26). The death of the first Apostle is described in Acts 12:1-23. Acts 13:1-14:28 records the first "mission" trip of Barnabas and Saul (Paul—Acts 13:9). They sailed to the Island of Cypress and then onto the mainland of Asia Minor. They mainly preached in the cities of the Galatian Province. When they arrived back at Antioch, they reported on the great success of the Gospel among both Jews and Gentiles. Some Pharisees who believed started causing some problems by trying to bind the Law of Moses on the Gentiles, along with circumcision (Acts 15:1-6). The problem was solved for most of the believers and Paul was ready to go back out again to preach the Gospel to other places. His second "mission" trip took him up through Asia Minor—all the way across to Troas—where he had a vision of a man in Macedonia calling for him to come there to preach. They sailed to the Macedonian coast and came to the city of Philippi. It is in this strongly Roman city that we will study about the next two special conversions—(1) Lydia; and (2) The Jailor.

Questions for Study and Discussion

- 1. What things are said about Timothy? (16:1-2)**
- 2. What indication is given of the growth of the churches that Paul and Barnabas had established in this area? (16:5)**
- 3. Who forbade them to preach in Asia (province) and Bithynia (province)? (16:6-7)**

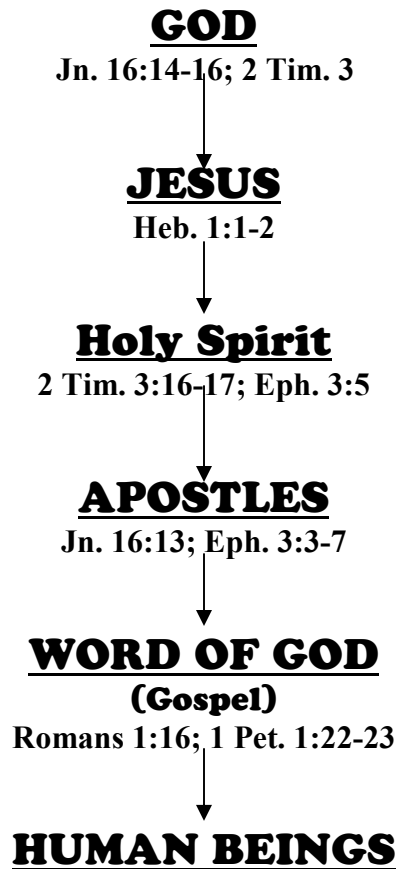
4. Why did Paul go out by the riverside at Philippi? (16:11-13)
5. How is Lydia described? (16:14)
6. What did Lydia and her household do to be right with God? (16:15)
7. Where did Paul and company stay while in Philippi? (16:15)

Questions to Challenge Your Thinking

1. Who taught Timothy the Old Testament Scriptures? (16:1; 2 Tim. 1:5)
2. Why did Paul have Timothy circumcised, but refused to require Titus to be circumcised? (16:3; Gal. 2:1-5)
3. Were women allowed to lead in the worship in the Synagogue?
4. Were there no men where they were having a prayer meeting? (16:13)
5. How did God open Lydia's heart? (16:14; 13:46-49)
6. What must always proceed conversion? (16:14-15)
7. Who would Lydia's household include? (16:15)

- 8. Can little children hear, believe, and obey the Gospel?**
- 9. Was Lydia told to believe and repent in order to be saved? How do you know the answer?**
- 10. How do we know if Lydia had a lot of money? (16:14)**
- 11. Does God force anyone to believe His Gospel?**
- 12. Does God open our hearts today like He did Lydia's?**
- 13. Has your heart been opened by God?**
- 14. Have you believed the message of the Gospel and repent and been baptized into Christ?**
- 15. Does God open everyone's heart?**

Discuss This Chart



- 1—Need to Believe
Message...and...**
- 2—Take Heed to it**

Lesson Six

"Conversion of the Jailer"
(Acts 16:16-40)

We are looking at "special conversions" in the Book of Acts. We must emphasize that there are many others mentioned, but these that we are studying seem to have a special emphasis.

Paul and company have already been successful in getting some people to obey the gospel in the city of Philippi, but they need to reach more—and they do! However, it took some undesirable circumstances to open the door for additional converts—as we shall see in this study of the conversion of the Philippian Jailer!

Questions for Study and Discussion

- 1. Who indicated that Paul and company were servants of the Most high God? (16:16-17)**

- 2. How did Paul cast out the evil spirit? (16:18)**

- 3. What did Paul and Silas do at midnight in Jail? (16:25)**

- 4. Why did the jailer ask: "*Sirs, what must I do to be saved?*" (16:30)**

- 5. What all would Paul's answer in verse 31 include? (16:31-34)**

- 6. Why did Paul want to be released publicly? (16:35-40)**

- 7. How did the magistrates feel about Paul's request or demand? (16:38-39)**

8. Where did Paul and Silas go upon being released? (16:40)

Questions to Challenge Your Thinking

1. Did this slave girl actually possess the power to foretell the future of people? (16:16)

2. How was she able to know who these men were? (16:17)

3. Could Paul and Silas have defended themselves before the magistrates at Philippi? (16:10-22)

4. Is there any way for us to know if God caused the earthquake and that He loosed all the bonds of the prisoners? (16:23-26)

5. Why would the Jailor kill himself if his prisoners escaped? (16:27-28)

6. Can a person truly believe in Jesus and not be willing to obey His commands to be saved? (16:31)

7. Why did Paul speak the Word of the Lord to the Jailor and to all that were in his house? (16:32)

8. Was repentance shown by the Jailor? If so, was repentance necessary before he could be saved? (16:33)

9. What does the expression mean: "*having believed in God with all his household.*" (16:34)

10. Have you had something undesirable to happen to you that has caused you to ask the question: "*What must I do to be saved?*"

11. If God can save a Jailor of a prison, do you think that he can save even you?

12. Why do people harden their hearts against what God is trying to do for them?

13. What stands out in your mind about the conversion of this man and his family?

14. Can you identify some acquaintance of yours that would be like this man?

Discuss This Chart

**Which is
True Faith?**

FAITH ONLY

OBEDIENT FAITH

Jn. 12:42

Jas. 2:18-24

Jas. 2:17, 24, 26

Matt. 7:21-23

1. What is meant by the term "dead faith?"
2. What is the difference between the Demons who "believe" and the person who has a dead faith?
3. Why are the Demons not saved who "believe?"

