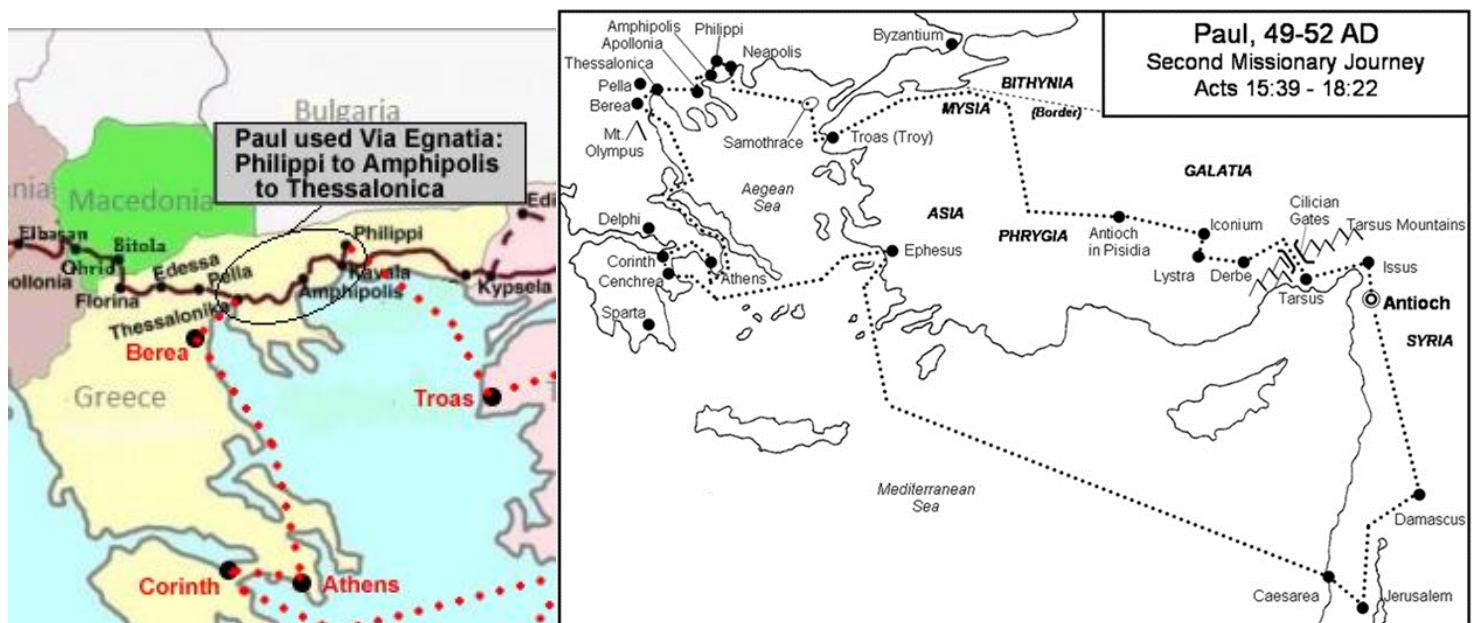


Acts 16:11-17:1 – Paul Enters Europe; Philippi



16:11 – Luke provides details of their journey which includes the seaports and the number of days at sea. In 16:11 it takes 2 days to cross the Aegean Sea from Troas to Neapolis with an overnight stop on the island of Samothrace. The wind was in their favor. (In Acts 20:6 the reverse trip, Philippi to Troas, takes 5 days.)

16:12 – Seaport Neapolis along Egnatian Way to Philippi.

Philippi History:

- The gold mines near Philippi were ceased by Philip II of Macedonia
- Named for Alexander the Great's father, King Philip II of Macedonia.
- 168 BC - Rome took Philippi after the 3rd Macedonian War
- The province of Macedonia was divided into four administrative districts and numbered #1-#4 (historian Livy explains this in Livy, *History* 45.29)
- 42 BC – Mark Antony and Octavian (eventually named Emperor Augustus) defeated Brutus and Cassius here for the assassination of Julius Caesar.
- Many of the Roman soldiers were settled here after the 42 BC battle
- 31 BC – Octavian defeated Mark Antony and Cleopatra at Actium and settled more of his military veterans in Philippi

Luke refers to Philippi as “which is a city of the first district of Macedonia.” This makes sense in the historical context that:

1. Philippi was in the first of four Roman administrative districts of Macedonia
2. Thessalonica was the capital, or the first city, of Macedonia and Amphipolis was the capital, or first city in the 1st district of Macedonia.

Some translations translate this line in a way that is historically inaccurate when they say, Philippi was “capital of Macedonia” or “the first city of that district” or “an important city in Macedonia” or “leading city of that district.”

Philippi was a Roman colony and Luke uses the Latin word of the Roman's, “kolonia” (κολωνια) here in his Greek text instead of the Greek “apoikia” (αποικια)

A Roman colony used Roman law because its people were Roman citizens and the city had been colonized into another land, here into the land of the Macedonians or Greeks. (Philippians 3:20)

16:13 – Since it was a Roman colony of retired veterans there appears to be no synagogue. Under Rabbi law a synagogue could be started if there were 10 Jewish men. Instead, the few Jews in the city and God-fearers met by the river. Meeting at a river provided the necessary water for the ritual purifications that was normally found in the Mikvehs.

16:14 – Lydia, a gentile from Thyatira in Asia (remember many Jews had been settled in this area by the Greek rulers) was a God-fearer who had most likely been introduced to the Jewish faith in a synagogue back in Thyatira. The people of Thyatira were known for their skill in manufacturing a purple dye taken from roots (a practice that continued until it was replaced with chemicals in the 1800's.) Lydia, a woman, had come to expand her trade in Philippi. Women in Macedonia were independent and Roman law (as found in a colony) granted a woman with 3 children (or, a freedwoman with 4 children) the right to initiate and proceed with legal transactions.

16:16 – Demon-possessed slave girl provided income for her owners.

Luke says she had a pythonic spirit” so she would have been a pythoness, a person who spoke oracles of Apollo while inspired by the god Pythian (Python was a serpent slain by Apollo and left to rot; python means “the rotting one”). This was one of the main features of the priestesses at Delphi in Greece, north of Corinth. Plutarch (Greek historian 46-120 AD) calls these speakers ventriloquists because they were like puppets giving utterances beyond their control. She produced a lot of money.

When **Jews** persecute Christians it is because of **doctrinal** issues.

When **Gentiles** persecute Christians it is because of **money**.

16:17 – The pythoness (or, ventriloquist) followed Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke and would advertise them using the name for God as “GOD MOST HIGH.” This is the Hebrew **el elyon** which is found in

- Genesis 14:18 used to refer to the God to who Melchizedek served as priest and then the title used by Gentiles in
- Num. 24:16 (Balam);
- Isaiah 14:14 (Satan/King of Tyre);
- Daniel 3:26 (Nebuchadnezzar as he approached the furnace and called Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego servants of the Most High God); and
- by the Legion of demons in Mark 5:7 when *they* “*He shouted at the top of his voice, ‘What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In God’s name don’t torture me!’*”

The slave owners lost their source of income and brought charges against Paul and Silas, the two Jews among the four (Luke was not a Jew and Timothy’s Jewish side was unrecognized because of his apparent Gentile look and background.)

16:19 – Paul had infringed on the rights of Roman citizens in a Roman colony. Paul and Silas where not Romans, nor were they Greeks, they were traveling, unemployed Jews!

16:20 – Roman Colony had municipal administration like Rome – two magistrates. They were called duumvirs in a Roman colony, but preferred the title of praetors. Cicero said: “While they are called duumvirs (*duo uiri*, ‘two men’) in our other colonies, these men wished to be called praetors” And, Luke uses the word “praetors” here in his text.

“These men **are** (exist, it’s not their fault)

Jews (Emperor Claudius had just recently driven Jews from Rome so there was a tendency to disgrace this rejected, rebellious people, Acts 18:2)

and are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful (nations conquered by Rome kept their gods, but they could not promote their foreign gods to Romans. Rome did recognize Moses and his books as legal and so allowed synagogues)

for us Romans to accept or practice.” (the verb describing the condition of the Romans makes them superior to those who merely exist as Jews)

16:22 – The Magistrates (praetors) hand Paul and Silas over to the lictors which are the police who as symbols of their and Rome’s authority carried a bundle of rods with an axe inserted among the rods.

The police, lictors, beat Paul and Silas with rods.

2 Cor. 11:25 Paul says he was beaten with rods like this 3 times when he writes 6 years later.

Acts 22:25 before a whipping or flogging Paul claims Roman citizenship

16:40 – Luke stays in Philippi because he uses “they”. Luke will rejoin Paul in Acts 20:5 on the return through Philippi onto Jerusalem