

Notes on the Greek New Testament Day 176 – June 25th – Acts 16:16-40

Works frequently referenced in these notes on Acts

Bruce, FF, *The Acts of the Apostles*, London, 2nd ed. 1952

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Verse 16

Ἐγένετο δὲ πορευομένων ἡμῶν εἰς τὴν
προσευχὴν παιδίσκην τινὰ ἔχουσαν πνεῦμα
πύθωνα ὑπαντῆσαι ἡμῖν, ἣτις ἐργασίαν πολλὴν
παρεῖχεν τοῖς κυρίοις αὐτῆς μαντευομένη·

πορευομαι go, proceed

τὴν προσευχὴν for the article, cf. 1:14; 2:42;
3:1; 6:4.

παιδίσκη, ἡς f female slave
πυθων, ωνος Python, spirit of divination;
ἔχω πνεῦμα π. be a fortuneteller

"The Greek speaks literally of a 'python spirit.'
The python was the symbol of the famous
Delphic oracle and represented the god Apollo,
who was believed to render predictions of
future events. The serpent had thus become a
symbol of augury, and anyone who was seen to
possess the gift of foretelling the future was
described as led by the 'python.' Greeks and
Romans put great stock on augury and
divination. No commander would set out on a
major military campaign nor would an
emperor make an important decree without
first consulting an oracle to see how things
might turn out. A slave girl with a clairvoyant
gift was thus a veritable gold mine for her
owners." Polhill

ὑπανταω meet
ἐργασία, ας f gain, profit
παρεῖχεν Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s παρεχω
act & midd cause, bring about
μαντευομαι tell fortunes, predict future

Here only in NT.

Verse 17

αὕτη κατακολουθοῦσα τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ ἡμῖν
ἔκραζεν λέγουσα: Οὗτοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι δοῦλοι
τοῦ θεοῦ τοῦ ὑψίστου εἰσίν, οἵτινες
καταγγέλλουσιν ὑμῖν ὁδὸν σωτηρίας.

κατακολουθοῦσα Verb, pres act ptc, f nom s
κατακολουθεω follow, accompany
κραζω cry out, shout

The imperfect is used of activity continuing
over several days (cf. v.18).

ὑψιστος, η, ον most high

καταγγελλω announce, declare
ὁδος, ου f way, path, road, journey
σωτηρια, ας f salvation

The term 'Most High God' and 'way of
salvation' would have had meaning for both
Jew and Gentile

Verse 18

τοῦτο δὲ ἐποίησε ἐπὶ πολλὰς ἡμέρας.
διαπονηθεὶς δὲ Παῦλος καὶ ἐπιστρέψας τῷ
πνεύματι εἶπεν· Παραγγέλλω σοι ἐν ὀνόματι
Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐξελθεῖν ἀπ' αὐτῆς· καὶ
ἐξῆλθεν αὐτῇ τῇ ὥρᾳ.

The first 'we' section ends here. The second
begins in 20:5.

διαπονηθεὶς Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m nom s
διαπονεομαι be greatly annoyed
ἐπιστρέψας Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s
ἐπιστρεφω turn round, turn
παραγγελλω command, instruct
ὥρα, ας f hour, moment, instant

Verse 19

Ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ κύριοι αὐτῆς ὅτι ἐξῆλθεν ἡ ἐλπίς
τῆς ἐργασίας αὐτῶν ἐπιλαβόμενοι τὸν Παῦλον
καὶ τὸν Σιλᾶν εἴλκυσαν εἰς τὴν ἀγορὰν ἐπὶ
τοὺς ἄρχοντας,

ιδόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl ὁραω
see, observe
ἐλπίς, ιδος f hope

"Luke's sense of humour appears in his choice
of ἐξῆλθεν here after its use in ver 18; their
'hope of profit' was in fact the expelled spirit
itself." Bruce

ἐπιλαμβανομαι take hold of, sieze

It may be significant in view of what follows
that Paul & Silas alone were seized while Luke
the Greek and Timothy the half Greek were
left alone (see v.20).

εἴλκυσαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl ἔλκω
draw, drag
ἀγορα, ας f market place

"τοὺς ἄρχοντας 'the magistrates'; this is the
Greek term for the supreme magistrates in any
city." Bruce

Verse 20

καὶ προσαγαγόντες αὐτοὺς τοῖς στρατηγοῖς εἶπαν· Οὗτοι οἱ ἄνθρωποι ἐκταράσσουσιν ἡμῶν τὴν πόλιν Ἰουδαῖοι ὑπάρχοντες,

προσαγαγόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl
προσαγω bring to, bring before
στρατηγος, ου m chief magistrate (the highest civil official in Philippi)

Bruce sees this as a repetition of the previous verse – not the ἄρχοντες sending them to the στρατηγοῖς

ἐκταρασσω stir up trouble

The effective preaching of the gospel stirs up trouble.

"Ἰουδαῖοι ὑπάρχοντες An appeal to anti-Jewish prejudice, emphasised by the contrasting Ῥωμαῖοις οὖσιν (v.21), which again is neatly countered by Paul in v.37, Ῥωμαῖους ὑπαρξοντας." Bruce

Verse 21

καὶ καταγγέλλουσιν ἔθῃ ἃ οὐκ ἐξεστὶν ἡμῖν παραδέχασθαι οὐδὲ ποιεῖν Ῥωμαῖοις οὖσιν.

καταγγέλλω see v.17
ἔθος, ους n custom, practice
ἐξεστὶν impersonal verb it is lawful, it is permitted

Their accusers claimed too much, for it is quite possible for Romans to be Christians. Nevertheless, they are right in seeing the gospel as judging human culture – whatever that culture may be.

παραδέχομαι accept, receive, recognise

Ὁν Ῥωμαῖοις οὖσιν Bruce comments, "The *coloni* was very conscious of the superiority of their Roman citizenship in contrast even with the status of the surrounding Greeks, not to speak of wandering Jews."

Verse 22

καὶ συνεπέστη ὁ ὄχλος κατ' αὐτῶν, καὶ οἱ στρατηγοὶ περιρήξαντες αὐτῶν τὰ ἱμάτια ἐκέλευον ραβδίσειν,

συνεπέστη Verb, aor act indic, 3 s
συνεφιστημι join in an attack
ὄχλος, ου m crowd, multitude
περιρήξαντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl
περιρηγνυμι tear off

The magistrates had the outer garments torn off Paul and Silas (they did not tear their own garments in shock at the apostles' 'crime').

κέλευω command
ραβδίζω whip, beat (with a stick)

"This beating with rods was carried out by the lictors, the ῥαβδουχοι of ver. 35... Cf. 2 Cor 11:25, τρις ἐραβδισθην." Bruce

Verse 23

πολλὰς τε ἐπιθέντες αὐτοῖς πληγὰς ἔβαλον εἰς φυλακὴν, παραγγείλαντες τῷ δεσμοφύλακι ἀσφαλῶς τηρεῖν αὐτούς·

ἐπιτιθημι place on, place
πληγη, ης f stoke, blow
βαλλω throw, place
φυλακη, ης f prison, imprisonment
παραγγείλαντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl
παραγγελλω command, instruct
δεσμοφυλαξ, ακος m prison guard, keeper of prison

Cf. Gen 39:21ff. LXX. There seem to be parallels between the narrative of the imprisonment of Paul and Silas and the *Testament of Joseph* in the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*.

ἀσφαλως adv safely, under close guard
τηρεω keep, observe, maintain

Verse 24

ὃς παραγγελίαν τοιαύτην λαβὼν ἔβαλεν αὐτούς εἰς τὴν ἐσωτέραν φυλακὴν καὶ τοὺς πόδας ἡσφαλίσατο αὐτῶν εἰς τὸ ξύλον.

παραγγελια, ας f order, command
τοιουτος, αυτη, ουτον such, of such kind
ἐσωτερος, α, ον inner
πους, ποδος m foot
ἡσφαλίσατο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s
ἀσφαλιζω secure, fasten
ξύλον, ου n wood, stocks

Bruce comments, "An instrument of torture similar to the stocks. It had more than two holes for the legs, which could thus be forced apart, causing great discomfort and pain."

Verse 25

Κατὰ δὲ τὸ μεσονύκτιον Παῦλος καὶ Σιλᾶς προσευχόμενοι ὕμνον τὸν θεόν, ἐπηκροῶντο δὲ αὐτῶν οἱ δέσμοι·

μεσονυκτιον, ου n middle of the night, midnight
ὕμνεω sing a hymn, sing praises to
ἐπηκροῶντο Verb, imperf midd/pass dep indic, 3 pl ἐπακροασμαι listen to
δεσμος, ου m prisoner, one held in chains

Verse 26

ἄφνω δὲ σεισμός ἐγένετο μέγας ὥστε σαλευθῆναι τὰ θεμέλια τοῦ δεσμοτηρίου, ἠνεώχθησαν δὲ παραχρῆμα αἱ θύραι πᾶσαι, καὶ πάντων τὰ δεσμὰ ἀνέθη.

ἄφνω suddenly
σεισμος, ου m earthquake
ὥστε so that, with the result that
σαλευθῆναι Verb, aor pass infin shake, disturb
θεμελιος, ου m (also θεμελιον, ου n)
foundation, foundation stone
δεσμοτηριον, ου n prison
ἠνεώχθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl
ἀνοιγω open
παραχρημα immediately, at once
θυρα, ας f door, gate

The doors would probably have been locked with bars which were loosened in the earthquake.

δεσμα, ων n (only in pl) bonds, chains
ἀνέθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s ἀνιμι
loosen

Verse 27

ἔξυπνος δὲ γινόμενος ὁ δεσμοφύλαξ καὶ ἰδὼν ἀνεωγμένας τὰς θύρας τῆς φυλακῆς σπασάμενος τὴν μάχαιραν ἤμελλεν ἑαυτὸν ἀναιρεῖν, νομίζων ἐκπεφευγέναι τοὺς δεσμίους.

ἔξυπνος awake
δεσμοφυλαξ, ακος m prison guard, keeper of prison
ἀνεωγμένας Verb, perf pass ptc, f acc pl
ἀνοιγω
σπασάμενος Verb, aor midd dep ptc, m nom s
σπαομαι draw (of swords)
μαχαιρα, ης f sword
ἤμελλεν Verb, imperf act indic, 3 s μελλω
(before an infin) be going, be about
ἀναιρεω do away with, kill, destroy
νομίζω think, reckon
ἐκπεφευγέναι Verb, perf act infin ἐκφευγω
escape, flee, run away

Guards were held personally responsible for their prisoners and in some instances were executed when they escaped, cf. 12:19.

Verse 28

ἐφώνησεν δὲ φωνῇ μεγάλῃ ὁ Παῦλος λέγων· Μηδὲν πράξεις σεαυτῷ κακόν, ἅπαντες γάρ ἐσμεν ἐνθάδε.

πράξης Verb, aor act subj, 2 s πρασσω
practice, do, collect (of taxes)
κακος, η, ον evil, bad, wrong, harm
ἅπας, ασα, αν (alternative form of πας) all,
whole; pl everyone
ἐνθαδε adv here, in this place

"Whether Paul's influence restrained the other prisoners from escaping, or they were stunned by the violence and suddenness of the earthquake, we can only guess." Bruce

Verse 29

αἰτήσας δὲ φῶτα εἰσεπήδησεν καὶ ἔντρομος γινόμενος προσέπεσεν τῷ Παύλῳ καὶ τῷ Σιλᾷ, αἰτεω ask, request, demand
φως, ωτος n light
εἰσπηδαω rush in

The verb suggests violent action

ἐντρομος terrified, trembling
προσεπεσεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s προσπιτω
fall at someone's feet, fall down before

Verse 30

καὶ προαγαγὼν αὐτοὺς ἔξω ἔφη· Κύριοι, τί με δεῖ ποιεῖν ἵνα σωθῶ;

προαγαγων Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s προαγω
lead, bring out
ἔφη Verb, imperf act ind, 3s φημι say

Κυριοι here in the sense, 'sirs'.

δεῖ impersonal verb it is necessary
σωθῶ Verb, aor pass subj, 1 s σωζω save

The jailer had probably heard, or had heard of, the fortune teller's witness concerning Paul and Silas as preachers of the 'way of salvation' (v.17). "Doubtless he regarded the earthquake as a supernatural vindication of their right to be so described." Bruce.

Verse 31

οἱ δὲ εἶπαν· Πίστευσον ἐπὶ τὸν κύριον Ἰησοῦν, καὶ σωθήσῃ σὺ καὶ ὁ οἶκός σου.

σωθήσῃ Verb, aor pass subj, 2 s σωζω

The same exhortation and condition applies to all of his household: it is not that if he believes then he and his household will be saved, but rather that each one of them must believe and so be saved.

Verse 32

καὶ ἐλάλησεν αὐτῷ τὸν λόγον τοῦ κυρίου σὺν πᾶσι τοῖς ἐν τῇ οἰκίᾳ αὐτοῦ.

Verse 33

καὶ παραλαβὼν αὐτοὺς ἐν ἐκείνῃ τῇ ὥρᾳ τῆς νυκτὸς ἔλουσεν ἀπὸ τῶν πληγῶν, καὶ ἐβαπτίσθη αὐτὸς καὶ οἱ αὐτοῦ πάντες παραχρῆμα,

παραλαβανω take, take along
νυξ, νυκτος f night
λουω wash, bathe

For this use of ἀπο, cf. Heb 10:22.

πληγων see v.23

παραχημα see v.26

"The washing and the baptism took place after he brought them out of the prison (v.30) and before he took them into his house (v.34), probably at a well in the courtyard." Bruce

"Throughout Luke's story he focused attention on the various signs evidencing conversion (i.e. speaking in tongues, expressions of joy, and hospitality). Here the evidence of conversion is the jailer's washing of the apostles' wounds. There then took place an even more significant 'washing,' when the jailer's family was baptised. Then the jailer treated Paul and Silas in a most unusual fashion for prisoners. He took them into his house and fed them at his own table. They were no longer prisoners in his eyes; they were brothers in Christ." Polhill

Verse 34

ἀναγαγόν τε αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸν οἶκον παρέθηκεν τράπεζαν καὶ ἠγαλλιάσατο πανοικεὶ πεπιστευκῶς τῷ θεῷ.

ἀναγαγών Verb, aor act ptc, m nom s ἀναγω
lead or bring up

"He did not act illegally in doing this; his responsibility was to produce his prisoners when called upon to do so." Bruce

παρέθηκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s
παρατιθημι place, put before
τραπέζα, ης f table, meal
ἠγαλλιάσατο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s
ἀγαλλιαω rejoice greatly, exult
πανοικεὶ adv with one's whole household

Here alone in the NT.

πεπιστευκῶς Verb, perf act ptc, m nom s
πιστευω believe (in)

Verse 35

Ἡμέρας δὲ γενομένης ἀπέστειλαν οἱ στρατηγοὶ τοὺς ράβδουχους λέγοντες· Ἀπόλυσον τοὺς ἀνθρώπους ἐκείνους.

στρατηγοὶ see v.20
ράβδουχος, ου m holder of rods,
policeman

Roman official, attendant of senior magistrate
ἀπολυω release, set free

Verse 36

ἀπήγγειλεν δὲ ὁ δεσμοφύλαξ τοὺς λόγους τούτους πρὸς τὸν Παῦλον, ὅτι Ἀπέσταλκαν οἱ στρατηγοὶ ἵνα ἀπολυθῆτε· νῦν οὖν ἐξεληθόντες πορεύεσθε ἐν εἰρήνῃ.

ἀπαγγελλω tell, inform
δεσμοφυλαξ see v.23

ἀπέσταλκαν Verb, perf act indic, 3 s

ἀποστελλω send, send out

ἀπολυθῆτε Verb, aor pass subj, 2 pl ἀπολυω

ἐξεληθόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m pl nom

ἐξερχομαι

εἰρήνη, ης f peace

Verse 37

ὁ δὲ Παῦλος ἔφη πρὸς αὐτούς· Δείραντες ἡμᾶς δημοσίᾳ ἀκατακρίτους, ἀνθρώπους Ῥωμαίους ὑπάρχοντας, ἔβαλαν εἰς φυλακὴν· καὶ νῦν λάθρα ἡμᾶς ἐκβάλλουσιν; οὐ γάρ, ἀλλὰ ἐληθόντες αὐτοὶ ἡμᾶς ἐξαγαγέτωσαν.

ἔφη Verb, imperf act ind, 3s φημι say

δείραντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl δερω

beat, strike, hit

δημοσιος, α, ον public (δημοσια publicly,
in public)

ἀκατακριτος, ον without trial by law,
uncondemned

Only here and 22:25.

λάθρα adv secretly, quietly

ἐκβάλλουσιν "The verb suggests the discourtesy of the act: contrast ἐξαγαγετωσαν, 'let them conduct us out'" Bruce

ἐξαγαγέτωσαν Verb, aor act imperat, 3 pl

ἐξαγω lead or bring out

Verse 38

ἀπήγγειλαν δὲ τοῖς στρατηγοῖς οἱ ράβδουχοι τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα· ἐφοβήθησαν δὲ ἀκούσαντες ὅτι Ῥωμαῖοί εἰσιν,

ῥημα, ατος n word, thing, matter
φοβομαι fear, be afraid

Verse 39

καὶ ἐληθόντες παρεκάλεσαν αὐτούς, καὶ ἐξαγαγόντες ἠρώτων ἀπελθεῖν ἀπὸ τῆς πόλεως.

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge

ἔρωταω ask, urge

Paul was concerned that the magistrates should acknowledge that they, as Christians, had broken none of the laws of Rome. Bruce suggests that "Paul's insistence on an official apology may have helped to protect the converts from persecution." Throughout Acts, Luke is concerned to show that Christianity is no threat to civil order.

Verse 40

ἐξεληθόντες δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς φυλακῆς εἰσηλθον πρὸς τὴν Λυδίαν, καὶ ἰδόντες παρεκάλεσαν τοὺς ἀδελφοὺς καὶ ἐξῆλθαν.

ἰδόντες Verb, aor act ptc, m nom pl ὁραω

see, observe

ἐξῆλθαν Verb, aor act indic, 3 pl ἐξερχομαι

"Paul refers to his Philippi experiences in 1 Th 2:2; 2 Cor 11:25. The subsequent history of the Philippian church makes pleasant reading; the same kindness as provided the missionaries with hospitality in the house of Lydia was shown in their twice contributing to Paul's needs when he went on to Thessalonica, and later during his imprisonment (Phil 4:10ff). Luke was apparently left behind to continue the work in Philippi, where he reappears in 20:5. His stay in Philippi may sufficiently account for his interest in the place." Bruce