

RELATED SCRIPTURES

Deuteronomy 7:9 | Genesis 17:1–14 | Matthew 28:19–20

STUDY FOR SERMON FROM 03.09.25

SUMMARY

While the magistrates had Paul and Silas unjustly imprisoned, the Holy Spirit caused the earth to quake and fracture their chains. Paul and Silas had reason and opportunity to flee, yet they remained in the prison. Though oppressed, it seems they were concerned—not for their own well-being—but for the well-being of one of their oppressors—the jailer. Through this selfless act, the heart of the jailer was overwhelmed after believing his only rational response to his failure was to take his own life. Instead, he witnessed a selfless act that was so compelling it caused him to come to Christ (v. 30). This was the moment of faith for the Philippian jailer; in this moment, the Holy Spirit seized control of his heart, and he was born again (v. 31). However, as part of their response to the jailer, Paul and Silas told him “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, *you and your household*” (emphasis added). How can this be? Why would Paul and Silas tell the jailer his household would be saved when they presumably are not even present? This messaging is consistent with what the apostles preached throughout the book of Acts to this point (Acts 2:38–39; 3:19–26; 4:12; 8:12, 35; 10:43; 13:38–39)—salvation for *households*. Further, the household language is consistent with God’s covenant promise with Abraham (Genesis 15:1–6; 17:1–8), which applies to Abraham, his household, heirs, and offspring. While it does not necessarily mean that every member of the household will come to faith, it does showcase the Lord’s intent to work generationally through households (Deuteronomy 7:9). When the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit purposed to redeem what we lost in the fall, they made a covenant to save—not a person—but a *people*. Circumcision was the covenant sign of this people in the Old Testament (Genesis 17:9–14), while the corresponding covenant sign in the New Testament is baptism (Matthew 28:19–20). This is why Paul and Silas spoke of the jailer’s household; as a new believer, the jailer was now a part of the Lord’s people, and his promise to preserve his people applies to *all believers*, and therefore, in faith, we invoke the Lord’s promise to all believers’ households as well.

GROUP QUESTIONS

Share something that surprises, encourages, or troubles you from the sermon or your direct reading of Acts 16:25–34.

While the act of baptism does not save, what are the things communicated through the act of baptism?

Why do we baptize children, in most cases, before they believe? What does this act say about God’s covenant promise?

If there’s one thing Jesus would want you to walk away believing and receiving as a result of this portion of Scripture, what is that thing?

CLOSE IN PRAYER

As you pray, be sure to include today’s themes in what you bring before God.