

# OpenTheo

## June 17th: Ezekiel 36 & Acts 16:6-40

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Renewal of the bond between people and land. Paul and Silas in Philippi.

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## Transcript

Ezekiel 36 And you, son of man, prophesy to the mountains of Israel, and say, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says the Lord God. Because the enemy said of you, Aha! and the ancient heights have become our possession.

Therefore prophesy and say, Thus says the Lord God. Precisely because they made you desolate, and crushed you from all sides, so that you became the possession of the rest of the nations, and you became the talk and evil gossip of the people. Therefore, O mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God.

Thus says the Lord God to the mountains and the hills, the ravines and the valleys, the desolate wastes and the deserted cities, which have become a prey and derision to the rest of the nations all around. Therefore thus says the Lord God. Surely I have spoken in my heart jealousy against the rest of the nations, and against all Edom, who gave my

land to themselves as a possession, with wholehearted joy and utter contempt, that they might make its pasture lands a prey.

Therefore prophesy concerning the land of Israel, and say to the mountains and hills, to the ravines and valleys, Thus says the Lord God. Behold, I have spoken in my jealous wrath, because you have suffered the reproach of the nations. Therefore thus says the Lord God.

I swear that the nations that are all around you shall themselves suffer reproach. But you, O mountains of Israel, shall shoot forth your branches and yield your fruit to my people Israel, for they will soon come home. For behold, I am for you, and I will turn to you, and you shall be tilled and sown.

And I will multiply people on you, the whole house of Israel, all of it. The cities shall be inhabited, and the waste places rebuilt. And I will multiply on you man and beast, and they shall multiply and be fruitful.

And I will cause you to be inhabited as in your former times, and will do more good to you than ever before. Then you will know that I am the Lord. I will let people walk on you, even my people Israel.

And they shall possess you, and you shall be their inheritance, and you shall no longer bereave them of children. Thus says the Lord God. Because they say to you, You devour people, and you bereave your nation of children, therefore you shall no longer devour people, and no longer bereave your nation of children, declares the Lord God.

And I will not let you hear any more the reproach of the nations, and you shall no longer bear the disgrace of the peoples, and no longer cause your nation to stumble, declares the Lord God. The word of the Lord came to me, Son of man, when the house of Israel lived in their own land, they defiled it by their ways and their deeds. Their ways before me were like the uncleanness of a woman in her menstrual impurity.

So I poured out my wrath upon them for the blood that they had shed in the land, for the idols with which they had defiled it. I scattered them among the nations, and they were dispersed through the countries. In accordance with their ways and their deeds I judged them.

But when they came to the nations, wherever they came, they profaned my holy name, in that people said of them, These are the people of the Lord, and yet they had to go out of his land. But I had concern for my holy name, which the house of Israel had profaned among the nations to which they came. Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God, It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came.

And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the

nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Lord God. When through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes, I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land.

I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you, and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh, and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and be careful to obey my rules.

You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. And I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses, and I will summon the grain and make it abundant, and lay no famine upon you. I will make the fruit of the tree and the increase of the field abundant, that you may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations.

Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good, and you will loathe yourselves for your iniquities and your abominations. It is not for your sake that I will act, declares the Lord God. Let that be known to you.

Be ashamed and confounded for your ways, O house of Israel. Thus says the Lord God, On the day that I cleanse you from all your iniquities, I will cause the cities to be inhabited, and the waste places shall be rebuilt, and the land that was desolate shall be tilled, instead of being the desolation that it was in the sight of all who passed by. And they will say, This land that was desolate has become like the garden of Eden, and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are now fortified and inhabited.

Then the nations that are left all around you shall know that I am the Lord. I have rebuilt the ruined places, and replanted that which was desolate. I am the Lord.

I have spoken, and I will do it. Thus says the Lord God. This also I will let the house of Israel ask me to do for them, to increase their people like a flock, like the flock for sacrifices, like the flock at Jerusalem during her appointed feasts.

So shall the waste cities be filled with flocks of people. Then they will know that I am the Lord. Ezekiel chapter 36 continues from the prophecy against Mount Seir in chapter 35, with verses 1 to 15 of this chapter likely functioning, as Daniel Bloch maintains, as a second panel, in parallel with the panel of chapter 35.

Various elements of the language of that chapter reappear in this one, such as the list of mountains, hills, valleys and ravines, which is used in chapter 35 verse 8, and appears again in verse 6 of this chapter. From judgment upon Mount Seir, the prophecy moves to address the mountains of Israel. Edom is still in view in verse 5 of this chapter, in which

Edom is singled out as an example of the opposing nations.

This prophecy, addressed as it is to the mountains of Israel, should also recall the prophecy Ezekiel delivered against the mountains of Israel back in chapter 6. He picks up much of the same language in this chapter, in which he prophesies the reversal of the desolation he formerly pronounced. Chapter 6 verses 1 to 6 reads, The word of the Lord came to me, Son of man, set your face toward the mountains of Israel, and prophesy against them, and say, You mountains of Israel, hear the word of the Lord God. Thus says the Lord God to the mountains and the hills, to the ravines and the valleys, Behold, I, even I, will bring a sword upon you, and I will destroy your high places.

Your altars shall become desolate, and your incense altars shall be broken, and I will cast down your slain before your idols, and I will lay the dead bodies of the people of Israel before their idols, and I will scatter your bones around your altars. Wherever you dwell, the cities shall be waste, and the high places ruined, so that your altars will be waste and ruined, your idols broken and destroyed, your incense altars cut down, and your works wiped out. Whereas that earlier prophecy foretold the devastation of the mountains of Israel, this chapter speaks of the restoration.

It speaks primarily of the renewal of the land of Israel, not merely of its people. In the preceding chapter, Edom had turned its envious gaze toward the territory of its brother Israel, fancying that now the house of Israel was largely removed from it, they could take possession of the land. Among other things, this chapter answers that threat from the south, assuring the hearers that the land would be restored, and the people within it.

After Judas fell to Babylon, its land became prey for the hungry remaining nations in the region, who acted like scavengers seeking to devour its carcass. The Lord declares his word to the land in this lamentable condition, reassuring it by speaking in his jealousy and anger to those who believe that they can seize the Lord's land with impunity. The Lord may have given his people into the hands of Babylon and allowed their land to be devastated, but he has not utterly abandoned it.

His jealous anger is excited against those around it who reproach it. They would suffer the same reproach themselves. Yet the land, here addressed as the mountains of Israel, would be restored, bursting forth in a new fruitfulness of blessing for the returning captives of the house of Israel.

The land, now empty and desolate, would be re-sown with men and animals, inhabited, worked, and made fruitful once again. Its former settlements would be rebuilt, and its waste places repopulated. The recognition formula, then you will know that I am the Lord, is frequently used in these prophecies.

The Lord proves who he is by demonstrating his character and his sovereign faithfulness. He keeps his promises, and he achieves his purposes. The land, currently divorced from

its proper inhabitants, will once again be possessed by them.

The Lord's land will be possessed and occupied by the Lord's people. While the land had formerly functioned as an agent of the Lord's wrath against an unfaithful nation, cutting them off through famine and pestilence and wild beasts, being ill spoken of by other peoples as a harsh and inhospitable land, it would once more be a place of life and blessing and fruitfulness. A new oracle begins in verse 16.

This oracle looks back to the defiling sins of Israel prior to their exile. In places like the Book of Leviticus, the land was described as a realm that could be polluted with bloodshed and abomination, spitting out defiling inhabitants. Rituals were prescribed, for instance, for dealing with defiling bloodshed in the land.

These rituals ensured that Israel would not suffer the fate of the previous wicked inhabitants. Israel's defiling of the land, however, chiefly occurred through the idolatry that it performed, something that was pervasive in all of the land. They established shrines in all of the high places, next to notable trees, and in many other such places in the land.

Although Scripture often speaks of the relationship between the Lord and his people as akin to the relationship between a man and his bride, we should not forget the land as a party in the relationship between the Lord and Israel. In some places of Scripture, this passage in Ezekiel being an important example, the land-people relationship really comes into the foreground. Here the relationship between the land and the people is seen to be akin to that between a man and a woman.

In the ceremonial law, it was forbidden to have relations with a menstruating woman, which was seen as a violation of a blood taboo. The menstruating woman was not culpable for her state, but the man who had relations with her during it committed a serious abomination. Here the land is defiled in a like manner by bloodshed and idolatry, likely a reference to the offering of child sacrifice, among other things.

The analogy is not exact, but the people's idolatry and bloodshed is seen to be akin to the defiling action of relations with the menstruating woman. As a consequence of it, they had to be expelled from the land by the Lord. The third commandment forbids bearing the name of the Lord in vain.

Many people read the third commandment in a narrow sense, thinking of it as not swearing, using the name of the Lord in a way that would dishonor the Lord by blasphemy. However, that commandment has a broader reference. The Lord had placed his name upon Israel.

They were his people. They were marked out by his presence. They were living in his land.

He had bound himself to them in covenant and made great promises to them, connecting their positive destiny with his purposes. Like a child bears a surname or a family name and a Christian name given to it by its parents, so Israel was named by the Lord and its actions and behavior reflected upon the Lord's character. Just as the child can bring dishonor to his family by his behavior, so the people of the Lord brought dishonor to the Lord by the way that they disobeyed him.

In the scattering of this unfaithful people among the nations, the Lord was dishonored in the way that a parent might be dishonored by a son that was wayward and wicked. The Lord declares his determination to deal with this intolerable situation. However, he wants the house of Israel to be in no doubt that it is not for their sake that he is acting.

Rather, he's acting because they bear his name. They are bringing his name into disrepute. The nations are blaspheming the Lord on account of Israel, and so he needs to vindicate his name by restoring his people and restoring his honor thereby.

He will do this as he takes the people from the various nations where they have been scattered, gathering them and placing them into the land once more. Back in Deuteronomy chapter 30, the Lord had promised that he would circumcise the hearts of his people, that he would restore his unfaithful people once the curse of exile had come upon them. Here he speaks of sprinkling clean water upon them.

This is a purification rite, but it's referring to a more radical change of the heart that he will achieve. This looks back to Ezekiel chapter 11 verses 19 to 20. The problem of the former covenant situation was not the covenant itself.

It was certainly not the It was rather the hard and rebellious hearts of the people set against obedience to the Lord. The Lord would deal with this root problem, and as this root problem was dealt with by his spirit, and they were led to walk in his statutes to obey his rules, then and only then could they enjoy life in the land in security and safety and blessing. Most of all, the covenant would be consummated in the fact that they would be the Lord's people and he would be their God.

This is an important covenant formula that we see repeated on several occasions in scripture. These themes of course are taken up at great length within the New Testament, where Christ brings in a new covenant and deals with the problem of the heart by the gift of his spirit. As the uncleanness and rebellion of the people's hearts were dealt with, the land would start to respond to them in fruitfulness.

Famine and pestilence with which the land had formerly afflicted them would no more be a problem, and as a result they would not be disgraced among the nations. Thrust into the sharpest of relief by this great act of grace, they would see their sin in a way that caused them to loathe themselves. A similar point is made in chapter 20 verses 41-43.

As a pleasing aroma I will accept you when I bring you out from the peoples and gather you out of the countries where you have been scattered, and I will manifest my holiness among you in the sight of the nations. And you shall know that I am the Lord when I bring you into the land of Israel, the country that I swore to give to your fathers. And there you shall remember your ways and all your deeds with which you have defiled yourselves, and you shall loathe yourselves for all the evils that you have committed.

Once again the Lord underlines the fact that he is not doing this for Israel's own sake. There is nothing in Israel itself that has provoked such deliverance. Rather he is acting out of concern for his own name.

The character of their restoration, and more particularly the way that it would affect the land, is described in the final verses of this chapter. The land that was once waste, desolate and ruined, would now be built up, fortified and fruitful. It would be repopulated and fertile.

The people of Israel would be multiplied like a sacrificial flock, a flock that is specifically set apart for the Lord's purposes. We might here think back to chapter 34 and the imagery of the flock and the shepherd. The Lord would sanctify his name by bringing recognition to the people of Israel and to their neighbours that he was truly the Lord.

The recognition formula that is found at the end of this section underlines this fact. Then they will know that I am the Lord. A question to consider.

This chapter speaks at several points of the relationship between the people and the land. How would you describe this relationship between the people and the land that is explored at various points in scripture? What might we learn from a fuller understanding of this relationship? The vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia was standing there, urging him and saying, Come over to Macedonia and help us.

And when Paul had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go on into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them. So setting out from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days.

And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshipper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul, and after she was baptized and her household as well, she urged us, saying, If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.

And she prevailed upon us. As we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a slave girl who had a spirit of divination, and brought her owners much gain by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and us, crying out, These men are servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to you the way of salvation.

And this she kept doing for many days. Paul, having become greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her. And it came out that very hour.

But when her owners saw that their hope of gain was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the rulers. And when they had brought them to the magistrates, they said, These men are Jews, and they are disturbing our city. They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or practice.

The crowd joined in attacking them, and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. And suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened.

When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. But Paul cried with a loud voice, Do not harm yourself, for we are all here. And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas.

Then he brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household. And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their wounds, and he was baptized at once, he and all his family.

Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household, that he had believed in God. But when it was day, the magistrates sent the police, saying, Let these men go.

And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, The magistrates have sent to let you go, therefore come out now and go in peace. But Paul said to them, They have beaten us publicly, uncondemned men who are Roman citizens, and have thrown us into prison. And do they now throw us out secretly? No, let them come themselves and take us out.

The police reported these words to the magistrates, and they were afraid when they



heard that they were Roman citizens. So they came and apologized to them, and they took them out and asked them to leave the city. So they went out of the prison and visited Lydia.

And when they had seen the brothers, they encouraged them and departed. In Acts chapter 16, the gospel finally arrives in Europe from Asia, and Paul and Silas carry out their mission in Philippi. Paul and Silas had a plan for the second missionary journey.

They intended to visit churches that they had already visited, and to spread the gospel further in Asia. However, as they try to do this, they find that the Holy Spirit stops them from engaging in further ministry in Asia. The apostles depend upon divine guidance for their mission throughout.

The mission is ultimately the Holy Spirit's mission. It's the mission of Christ continued from heaven, in his ascended position. We could perhaps draw comparisons here with the way that kings in the Old Testament seek the Lord's counsel before battles, military maneuvers, or various campaigns.

Paul and Silas are engaged in a different sort of conquest. The gospel is spreading from Jerusalem and Judea, through places like Samaria, through Syria, through Asia Minor, and now into Europe. And at each step, the Spirit is directing those who are spearheading the mission.

How the negative direction of the Spirit came is not entirely clear. Perhaps it came in the form of prophetic words. Maybe the missionaries received some strong internal intuition about the Spirit's direction.

Or maybe there was a vision, or perhaps just some obstructing circumstances. Whatever it was, it was clear that this was not the way that the Lord wanted them to go. In verse 6, the Holy Spirit forbids them, and in verse 7, the Spirit of Jesus does not allow them to go into Bithynia.

The association between the Holy Spirit of God and the Spirit of Jesus is a very important indication of just how high Luke's Christology is. In Luke's understanding of Jesus, Jesus is so identified with God that God's Holy Spirit is understood as the Spirit of Jesus. After this succession of obstacles or negative guidance, the missionaries go down to Troas.

Troas was in the region of the famous city of Troy, about 25 miles away. It was beneath the Hellespont and would have been an ideal place from which to sail to Macedonia. One way to see this perhaps is that Paul and Silas are engaging in an invasion of Macedonia and Europe from Asia.

And this was the mirror image or reversal of Alexander the Great's invasion of Asia from Macedonia earlier in history. Paul receives a vision of a man of Macedonia. The man doesn't seem to be a specific individual.

Some commentators have suggested that the man might have been Alexander the Great or perhaps the Philippian jailer. However, no indication of either of these things is given us within the text itself. We should note that the first occurrence of the we pronoun for the missionary journeys occurs here.

It seems as though Luke may have joined Paul and Silas in Troas, subtly indicating his presence by this shift in the language. With this shift in the pronouns we have an indication that we are now getting a first-hand report of what occurred. Following the vision, Paul and Silas set sail from Troas to Samothrace and then on to Neapolis, from where they go to the small city of Philippi, which is a Roman colony in the region.

The city of Philippi enjoyed autonomous rule and exemption from taxation and would have had a far more Roman character than many other cities. This is the first arrival of the Gospel in Europe and the significance of this event should not be understated. From this small seed of an event arises vast swathes of human history.

On the Sabbath, Paul and Silas go to a place outside of the city, by the riverside, where they expect that there will be a place of prayer, possibly a synagogue. Some have suggested that Jews and God-fearers met there because it was outside a line restricting burials and small cults to a site outside of the city proper. Perhaps finding no evidence of a synagogue within the city, they looked for the most likely site of prayer for a small Jewish community.

Beside a river would be a promising location for such a community. It would be a place where ritual washings could be performed. It was also possible that they had heard reports in the city of a group meeting in such a location.

The likelihood that it was a synagogue community is lowered by the fact that it seems to be primarily women engaged in prayer, rather than the male and female company that one might expect in a typical synagogue. One of the people there is Lydia from Thyatira, a Lydian city that might help us to explain Lydia's name. She is a seller of purple goods.

There's no statement here that she actually dyes the goods herself. If she dyed the goods herself, she might have been kept outside of normal society as it was a smelly profession. Another example of such a smelly profession would be the work of tanning.

We encountered Simon the Tanner at the end of chapter 9 and beginning of chapter 10. It's likely that Lydia had some independent status and wealth, but as a foreign merchant she would have been looked down on by any member of the local aristocracy. Nevertheless, she seems to have a large enough house to be able to put up Paul and Silas without displacing the other members.

She also seems to have a number of people working for her as slaves and others. Lydia seems to be a God-fearer, not a Jew nor a pagan, but she opens up her heart to the

gospel and as a result her whole household is baptized. The description of the baptism of her household with her suggests that it's almost a matter of course that the faith of the leader of the household would be shared by all of the members within it.

Although the other members of the household would presumably largely be adult slaves, Lydia's reception of the gospel is expected to have implications for everyone within her orbit. This is a feature of the reception of the gospel that we can see on a number of occasions within the New Testament. The reception of the gospel is not just a matter of personal heart conversion, it's a matter of public solidarities, alignments and allegiances.

And where these sorts of things are expressed by the head of a household, everyone under them, children, slaves and others, are implicated within their decision. While each person would be expected to affirm this within their own lives, it was presumed that they would do and that their coming under the reign of Christ was not just a matter of private and personal individual decision. While they're going to the place of prayer, Paul and Silas are met by a slave girl who has a spirit of divination and who follows them, declaring that they are servants of the Most High God.

This girl is possessed by a Pythonian spirit, a spirit of divination, inspired by Apollo the Pythian god who defeated the Python servant. This servant girl might be similar to some of the priestesses at Delphi. The confrontation with demons and evil spirits that we see here continues from the book of Luke.

In the gospel of Luke we see Jesus confronting the spirits in his temptations in the wilderness, in rebuking and exorcising demons. The same conflict continues here. The apostles are struggling against Satan's kingdom.

Throughout this book of Acts we've already seen magicians like Simon the sorcerer and Elymas and in later chapters we'll see more examples of people committed to magical arts. Lest we forget the missionaries are not struggling against flesh and blood but against principalities and powers and rulers of this present age. In carrying out this mission they are facing many evil forces that will seek to oppose them or drive them back.

The slave girl is bearing witness to Paul and Silas but in a way that is quite troubling, perhaps not least in the fact that she is a voice of someone representing polytheism. After many days of this Paul becomes annoyed and commands the spirit to depart from her and as a result the owners of the slave girl are angry because of their loss of money. What happens here is a sort of threat to the social order in the process of which the character of the social order is revealed.

This is a society built upon demons and upon the desire for money. They are accused of threatening the customs and the laws of the city when they are brought before the leaders. These men are Jews and they are disturbing our city.

They advocate customs that are not lawful for us as Romans to accept or to practice. This is very similar language that we find elsewhere in the book of Acts on the lips of the Jews. The movement of Christ is overturning both Jewish and Roman society.

They are here blamed as Jews but this is ironically similar to what we see the Jews accusing them of in chapter 21 verse 21. The crowd attacked them and the magistrates align with the crowd. They strip Paul and Silas of their clothes and beat them with rods.

This was probably a public beating designed to humiliate them, presenting them as threats to the peace. After this humiliating beating they're thrown into the prison and committed to the charge of the jailer who puts their feet in the stocks. There are a few examples of deliverances from prison in the book of Acts.

These events take the pattern of the great jail break itself, the story of the resurrection when Christ was delivered from the clutches of the grave and from the tomb guarded by the soldiers. Here Paul and Silas are engaged in prayer and singing hymns to God. Perhaps we may even imagine them singing imprecatory psalms calling for God to act in their deliverance and in judgment upon those who have opposed them.

There's a great earthquake, the foundations of the prison are shaken, all the doors are opened and everyone's bonds are unfastened. This is truly remarkable. This is not just the release of the as in chapter 12, this is a more general release.

This is something that shows the power of the gospel more generally, to loose every chain, to deliver not just Paul and Silas as the messengers of the Lord but everyone associated with them. Waking up and seeing that the prison doors are opened, the jailer is terrified and he seeks to kill himself. He has failed in his charge, he presumes that all the prisoners have escaped but Paul calls with a loud voice and reassures him and the jailer goes in and sees that Paul and Silas are still there with all of the other prisoners.

In his fear he throws himself down before them and asks, what must I do to be saved? These men were committed to his charge, presumably as missionaries of some foreign god and now a manifestly divine sign has occurred, one that does not look good for him. What can he do to be delivered from the wrath of this god who is angry with him because he has mistreated his messengers? Paul and Silas' response is that he should believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. As he submits himself to Christ he will know deliverance both in the present and in the future from the wrath to come and not just for him but him and his household.

The presumption once again is that the household is included in his response. Paul and Silas go on to speak the word of God to his household and they all respond in faith. They are all baptised and then he tends to their wounds and puts food before them.

The next day the magistrates send the police with instructions to release them and the

jailer tells Paul but Paul is not willing to go. They have been treated as disturbers of the peace, they have been humiliated and dishonoured, they have been falsely accused and badly mistreated and to treat a Roman citizen in this way was a very serious thing to do. The magistrates should come and release them publicly.

The public wrong that they committed to them should be answered with a public apology. When the magistrates come they ask them to leave the city and so they leave the prison, they visit Lydia and then they spend time with the brothers, those who presumably had been converted during their time of ministry within the city. A question to consider, how does the story of the ministry of Paul and Silas in Philippi reveal the character of Philippi as a city serving as an indictment of the city and its values?