

THE
UNSEEN
REALM

Rediscovering the Spiritual World of the Bible



Spiritual Discernment

A Crucial Necessity!

The Mystery in Acts 16

“Once when we were going to the place of prayer, we were met by a female slave who had a spirit by which she predicted the future. She earned a great deal of money for her owners by fortune-telling. She followed Paul and the rest of us, shouting, “These men are servants of the Most High God, who are telling you the way to be saved.” She kept this up for many days. Finally Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, ‘In the name of Jesus I command you to come out of her!’ At that moment the spirit left her.” (Acts 16:16–18, NIV)

What Paul DIDN'T Do:

- Paul didn't confuse her words as proof of someone who is saved.
- Paul didn't let her continue, even if it meant stopping the attention she was bringing to their cause.
- Paul did not try to gain profit or leverage her influence to grow himself or the gospel in popularity.

What Paul **DID** Do:

- Paul made it a habit to go to a place of prayer.
 - *It is likely that in the days leading up to this, he prayed for discernment & wisdom*
- In the name of Jesus, Paul casts out the demon **without berating the woman.**

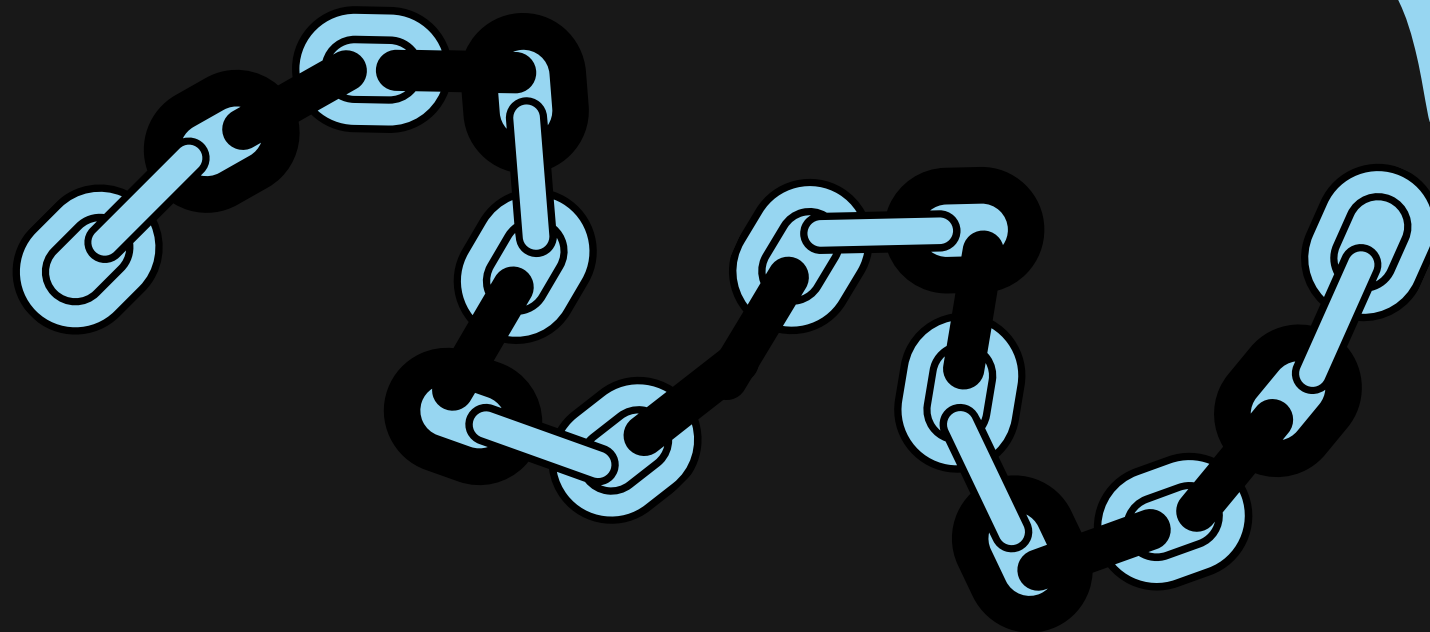
The Consequences

“When her owners **realized that their hope of making money was gone**, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to face the authorities. They brought them before the magistrates and said, ‘**These men are Jews, and are throwing our city into an uproar by advocating customs unlawful for us Romans to accept or practice.**’” (Acts 16:19–21)

*To my believers: do not confuse **tolerance** with **love or agreement.***

The Consequences (Part 2: Miracle in Jail)

“About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everyone’s chains came loose...”



The Consequences (Part 2: Miracle in Jail)

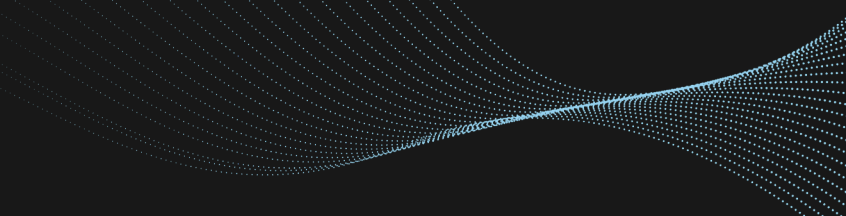
The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. But Paul shouted, “Don’t harm yourself! We are all here!”

The jailer called for lights, **rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. He then brought them out and asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”**

(Acts 16:25–30)

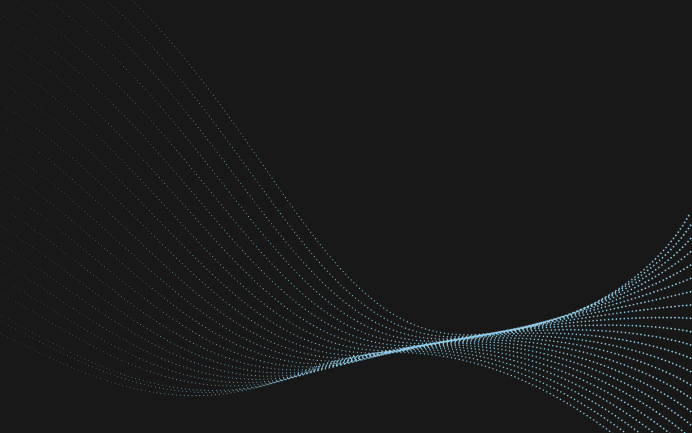
The Consequences (Part 2: Miracle in Jail)

“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household. ³² Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. ³³ At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his household were baptized. ³⁴ The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; **he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole household.** (Acts 16:31-34)



Paul's discernment and casting out of a demon led to him and his brethren being physically abused, humiliated, unjustly thrown in jail, and facing possible death...

But it also led to salvation being made known to prisoners, and the conversion of a man and his entire home.





**How Can I Grow in
Discernment?**

Where Do I Even Start??

Romans 12:1-2, The Key to Discernment

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Let’s briefly break that down...

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy. *(First, reflect on what has already been done, especially through Jesus)*
to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. *(Next, surrender ALL of yourself to be consumed by God’s holy, purifying fire).*
Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind *(Allow the Spirit to influence your thoughts and actions).*

THEN you will be able to test and approve (discern) what God’s will is—His good, pleasing and perfect will.” *Romans 12:1-2 NIV*