



SHAKEN

When God Shakes a City

Lessons from Acts 16

Introduction

The book of Acts records the expansion of the early church as the Holy Spirit worked through ordinary believers to transform cities and lives.

One powerful example occurs in Acts chapter 16, when the apostle Paul traveled to the Roman city of Philippi. What began as a simple prayer meeting eventually led to deliverance, persecution, worship in prison, and a miraculous breakthrough.

This chapter reveals an important pattern: when God begins to move, things start to shake.

People are positioned, prayer increases, spiritual authority confronts darkness, and worship releases God's power.

In this study we will explore four key principles from Acts 16:

- God positions people for revival
- Prayer opens the door for the Spirit
- Discernment activates spiritual authority
- Worship breaks chains

1. God Positions People for Revival

Scripture Reading

Acts 16:9–10 (NLT)

“That night Paul had a vision: A man from Macedonia in northern Greece was standing there, pleading with him, ‘Come over to Macedonia and help us!’ So we decided to leave for Macedonia at once, having concluded that God was calling us to preach the Good News there.”

Paul had plans to travel to other regions, but the Spirit of God redirected him.

Instead of Asia or Bithynia, God led Paul to Macedonia and specifically to the city of Philippi.

This teaches us an important spiritual principle: before God changes a city, He positions His people.

Many times believers do not realize that God is guiding their steps. What appears to be a simple decision or circumstance may actually be divine positioning.

God moves people so that His purposes can unfold.

God moves people so that His purposes can unfold.

Fill in the Blank

01 Paul saw a vision of a man from _____.

02 The man asked Paul to _____ and help them.

03 God often positions _____ before He moves _____.

Bible Observation Activity

Read Acts 16:11–15.

Write the name of the first person in Philippi who responded to the gospel.

What did the Lord do to help her receive the message?

2. Prayer Opens the Door for the Spirit

Scripture Reading

Acts 16:13 (NLT)

“On the Sabbath we went a little way outside the city to a riverbank, where we thought people would be meeting for prayer...”

Before miracles occurred in Philippi, there was prayer.

Paul and his companions searched for a place where people were seeking God. That small prayer gathering became the starting point of revival in that city.

Prayer invites the presence of God, and when God’s presence enters a situation, transformation begins.

Throughout Scripture, prayer precedes powerful moves of God.

Fill in the Blank

1. Paul went to the river because people were gathering for _____.
2. Prayer invites the _____ of God.
3. Revival often begins with a _____ group of people seeking God.

Activity

Write three things you want God to do in your life, family, or church. Spend a few minutes praying about these requests.

3. Discernment and Spiritual Authority

Scripture Reading

Acts 16:16–18 (NLT)

“One day as we were going down to the place of prayer, we met a slave girl who had a spirit that enabled her to tell the future...”

The girl followed Paul and his companions for many days, shouting that they were servants of God.

Although her words were technically correct, the source behind them was not from God.

Paul waited before responding. Then, at the right moment, he commanded the spirit to leave her.

This teaches an important lesson: spiritual authority requires discernment.

Discernment means understanding what is truly happening in the spiritual realm and responding according to God’s timing.

Fill in the Blank

1. The girl had a spirit of _____.
2. She followed Paul for many _____.
3. Spiritual authority requires _____.

Reflection

Why is it important to seek God’s timing before reacting to situations? _____

4. Worship That Breaks Chains

Scripture Reading

Acts 16:25–26 (NLT)

“Around midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening.”

Despite being beaten and imprisoned, Paul and Silas chose to worship God.

Their worship was not based on their circumstances but on their faith. Then God responded.

“Suddenly there was a massive earthquake, and the prison was shaken to its foundations...”

The prison doors opened and the chains fell off.

Worship invited God’s power into the situation.

Fill in the Blank

1. At midnight Paul and Silas were _____ and _____.
2. A great _____ shook the prison.
3. All the prison doors _____.

Personal Activity

Write a short prayer of praise to God.

Example:

“Lord, I thank You because You are faithful in every situation.”

Your prayer:_____

Final Reflection

Acts 16 reveals a pattern for how God moves.

First, God positions His people.

Then prayer prepares the environment.

Discernment confronts darkness.

Finally, worship releases breakthrough.

When believers walk in these principles, God begins to move powerfully.

Self-Evaluation

Which area do you want to grow in the most?

- ☐ Trusting God's direction in my life
- ☐ Developing a stronger prayer life
- ☐ Growing in spiritual discernment
- ☐ Worshiping God during difficult times