

A Miracle at Midnight

Acts 16:16-34

In Acts 16 we find one of the most dramatic stories in the New Testament involving baptism. It is the well-known account of the conversion of the Philippian jailer. The events surrounding his baptism can be viewed in three parts. It is kind of like the scenes of a theater piece or play. Each one adds information and moves the audience toward the climax of the story. As we look at Acts 16, each scene will help us grasp the significance of the “miracle at midnight” for our own lives.

1. In the marketplace, 16-24: Opposition

- Explain how the owners of the slave girl used ‘race tactic’ and the ‘traditions ploy’ to get rid of Paul and Silas (20, 21). Have you or others you know experienced similar things when sharing the gospel? Explain.
- Why does God allow his servants to suffer such difficulty (22)?
- According to the last Beatitude, those who suffer for Christ are “blessed” (Matthew 5:10). In what sense is this true?

2. In Prison, 25-31: Salvation

- After having been savagely beaten, how was it possible for Paul and Silas to rejoice?
- Can you give an example of how you rejoiced in spite of being mistreated for Jesus’ sake?
- “*Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved*” (31). What does it mean to believe? How can one know if he or she has exercised saving faith? (John 6:47).
- Does verse 31 promise that everyone in a household will be saved? Note verse 32.

3. At Home, 32-34: Evidence of conversion

The jailer and his family are baptized.

- What is the actual meaning of baptism? Romans 6:1-11.
- In light of Matthew 28:18-20, why is baptism so significant?

Reflection

- What do you think God would have you learn personally from this passage?