

**LESSON NO. 21** - Please read Acts 16,17,18,19 once more. Today this phrase caught my heart and held it tight: ". . there was a man . .". Today it seemed good to delve in more time and study together in Acts 16,17,18,19. Together we can marvel at the Holy Spirit taking what is very ordinary and making it into something extraordinary.

Theme: There are no "accidents" or "surprises" which catch Sovereign, Omnipotent, Omniscient God by surprise. Sovereign God rules over every molecule in His universe.

How shall we know this great truth for ourselves?

For our answer on how this happens, let us consider that it is likely found in the following rather insignificant little phrase: "**There was a certain man (or woman)**".

Most scholars believe the oldest Book in the Bible is the Book of Job. Consider and carefully weigh the very first verse of the oldest book in the Bible:

- Job 1:1 **There was a man** in the land of Uz, whose name was Job; and that man was blameless and upright, and one who feared God and shunned evil.

Doesn't that sound like a **certain man**, at a **certain time** in the history of mankind who resided in a **certain place**? As we continue to read about Job we find that he was a man whose life was full of great blessings and great pain interwoven. Who was controlling ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES AND EVENTS which confronted Job? Yes, our Sovereign God was in complete control.

From that truth we can accurately conclude that God is in complete control of all of His universe and all of its inhabitants. Job's experiences and circumstances have been repeated in some measure by all men and women since sin was brought into the world, which produced the Curse of Sin declared in Genesis 3!

- Psalm 33:13-15, The Lord looks from heaven; He sees all the sons of men. From the place of His dwelling He looks On all the inhabitants of the earth; He fashions their hearts individually; He considers all their works.

Truth: Let's look at the "**certain men and women**" in our passages in Acts who lived at a certain time and place and who had NEVER heard of Jesus Christ before.

- Acts 16:14-15 Now **a certain woman named Lydia** heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshiped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. And when she and her household were baptized, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us.
- Acts 16:25-32 But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them. 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 chains were loosed. And

the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself. But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here." Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas. And he brought them out and said, "**Sirs, what must I do to be saved?**" So they said, "**Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.**" Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house.

- Acts 17:3-4 explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I preach to you **is the Christ.**" And **some of them were persuaded**; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.
- Acts 17:12 Therefore **many of them believed**, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men.
- Acts 17:34 However, **some men joined him and believed**, among them **Dionysius** the Areopagite, a woman named **Damaris**, and others with them.
- Acts 18:8 Then **Crispus**, the ruler of the synagogue, **believed on the Lord with all his household**. And **many** of the Corinthians, **hearing, believed and were baptized**.
- Acts 19:18-20 And **many who had believed** came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all. And they counted up the value of them, and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver. So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.

**Question:** When Paul and his co-laborers were sent to declare the truth and beauty of Jesus Christ to all the known world, why were they sent to certain places and why upon hearing the Gospel did **some believe** and trust in Jesus Christ and **some reject Him**? Why did some love Jesus Christ immediately and others wanted to harm and destroy the messengers?

**Answer:** Jesus explained why "certain men or women" will hear and believe the Gospel.

- John 6:37 **All that the Father** gives Me **will come to Me**, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out.

**Question:** Now that we know that God chooses certain men and women to be Love Gifts to His beloved Son, we surely need to ask, "**Why?**"

**Answer:** Every person born has had the "image of God in them marred, distorted and disfigured by the leprosy of God-rejecting thoughts and actions". The Holy Spirit will literally change an individual from the "inside out" who trusts Jesus to be their Lord and Savior. These are eternal souls whom Almighty Creator God chose from eternity past to redeem, reconcile and regenerate. He will shape and make them into loving images He

is perfecting by molding into Christlikeness. This will be brought about by experiences in each life that He sovereignly authors to bring about this metamorphosis.

The ultimate mystery of man: "**Why me, Lord?**"

**Question:** What do we find in Acts 16,17,18, 19?

**Answer:** We find names! What do these names represent? Redeemed chosen people.

Theme: ". . . there was a man (or, there was a woman)..."

My, how ordinary and inauspicious is that phrase. Why, we know for certain there have been billions and billions of creatures born into this world who would fit this description, Could any phrase be any more ordinary or mundane? What could possibly be different about "this man", or, "this woman"?

Ahhhh . . . the mystery is soon solved by the very inspired words of God:

- John 1:11-13 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, **to them He gave the right to become children of God**, to those who believe in His name: **who were born**, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but **of God**.
- Romans 8:14-17 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, **these are sons of God**. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, "Abba, Father." The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that **we are children of God**, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

**Takeaway Question:** Do you love Jesus Christ? If so, how will it be evident?

- John 14:23-24 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

**Jesus' Last Commandment:**

- John 13:34-35 "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

All our love to All,  
In Christ -  
Jon + Philis

Further Study Opportunity: As further encouragement you likely will enjoy tracing what the Bible tells us about other “certain men and women” who faithfully loved God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit in their generation in the certain time and place they were brought into the world to glorify their Creator.

- Matthew 12:10 And behold, **there was a man** who had a withered hand. And they asked Him, saying, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?”—that they might accuse Him.
- Mark 1:23 Now **there was a man** in their synagogue with an unclean spirit. And he cried out,
- Luke 2:25 And behold, **there was a man** in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him.
- Luke 8:41 And behold, **there came a man named Jairus**, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And he fell down at Jesus’ feet and begged Him to come to his house,
- Luke 14:2 And behold, **there was a certain man** before Him who had dropsy.
- Luke 19:2 Now behold, **there was a man** named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich.
- Luke 23:50 Now behold, **there was a man named Joseph**, a council member, a good and just man.
- John 1:6 **There was a man sent from God**, whose name was **John**.
- John 3:1 **There was a man** of the Pharisees named **Nicodemus**, a ruler of the Jews.
- Acts 10:1 **There was a certain man** in Caesarea called **Cornelius**, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment.
- John 5:5 "Now a **certain man was there** who had an infirmity thirty-eight years."
- Luke 16:19 “**There was a certain rich man** who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. [Note: This man is an example of a "certain man" at a "certain time" in a "certain place" who **rejected** His Creator.]
- Now there is a certain person, living in a certain place reading this lesson at a certain time. Yes, **you are that person!** What is God recording about your life today?