

JESUS, KING OF HOPE

JESUS, KING OF THE NATIONS · ACTS 16 · NOVEMBER 30, 2025 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

“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.” (Acts 16:25-26a)

Introduction

- Advent
- Our series, “Jesus, King of the Nations”
- Paul the Apostle and his ministry journeys to the nations
- The City of Philippi

The Good News of Jesus Brings Hope to Lydia (Acts 16:11-15)

- Meeting at “the place of prayer”
- Lydia’s standing and situation
- Lydia’s heart is opened and her household transformed
- Lydia’s generous response

Conflicting Kingdoms and Jesus, the King of Hope (Acts 16:16-27)

- Conflict with demonic spirits, enslavement, and the money-hungry (Acts 9:1-20)
- Conflict with earthly authorities and crowds (Acts 16:19-22)
- Conflict with imprisonment and the darkness of night and despair (Acts 16:23-27)

The Good News of Jesus Brings Hope to the Jailer (Acts 16:28-34)

- Meeting in the broken prison
- The jailer’s standing and situation
- The jailer’s heart is opened and his household transformed
- The jailer’s generous response

A Return to Earthly Kingdoms (Acts 16:35-40)

- The revelation of earthly kingdoms’ lack of power (Acts 16:35-39)
- The hopeful community of Christ has the last word (Acts 16:40)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. What gives you hope these days? What makes you feel a lack of hope in life?
2. This week we begin a new sermon series, “Jesus, King of the Nations,” the third part of our journey through Acts. Today we explore the story of Paul and Silas in Philippi in Acts 16:11-40. Whether on your own or with others, begin your study in prayer, asking God to speak to you through His word, and then read that text aloud.
3. Paul and Silas have a powerful ministry amongst a group of God-fearing Gentiles led by Lydia in Acts 16:11-15. What do you notice about Lydia’s standing in society? What do you

notice about her response?

4. What do you think it looks like to put our resources at the service of God like Lydia?
5. As their ministry in Philippi continues, Paul and Silas run into conflict. How would you summarize the areas and spheres of conflict seen in 16:16-24?
6. In his letter known as Ephesians, Paul writes that “our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12). How do these words apply to Acts 16?
7. How have you seen spiritual conflict play out at multiple levels like Paul describes and we see in Acts 16?
8. The story takes a dramatic turn in 16:25-34. What happens? How is the story of the Philippian jailer similar to that of Lydia earlier in the chapter?
9. Eventually, the authorities of the city decide to release Paul and Silas but they refuse to let it be an easy release. Why do you think they do this and what do you think is becoming clear in 16:35-40?
10. What is one thing you sense God calling to your attention personally through this week’s study? If you are with a small group, discuss that with one another and then pray about what you shared. If you are on your own, write it down, pray about it, and consider sharing your thoughts with someone this week.

DIG DEEPER:

Exploring Faith

- How might belief in God, and particularly belief that Jesus is Savior for people from all nations and all social statuses, bring hope? Where do you most struggle with belief in God or Jesus as Savior?

Growing in Faith

- Read through the book of Acts from chapter 13-28 to better understand the ministry of Paul the Apostle. What stands out to you? What is confusing to you?
- How might God want to stretch your vision about who needs to hear the good news of hope in Jesus? Is there someone you might have previously overlooked that you could share your faith with this week?

Centered in Faith

- To gain a more comprehensive understanding of the life and ministry of the Apostle Paul, consider reading the entire book of Acts, alongside of a helpful book like N. T. Wright, *Paul: A Biography* or F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*.
- Paul brought Silas with him as he ministered in Jesus’ name. Who is someone you might partner with to share about Jesus with those you know?