

# Heaven Visits Philippi

Acts 16:16-31

*Halifax: 16 December 2012*

## **Introduction**

You may have noticed my sermon title today:

- “Heaven visits Philippi.”

I want to point out to you that I am using “heaven” in the same way that we use “Washington” to refer to the US or “Ottawa” to refer to Canada.

- I am talking, in other words, about what happened when King Jesus,
  - the king who has His throne in heaven,
  - sent His ambassadors to Philippi.
- The Kingdom of Christ is a kingdom that could immediately crush all opposition in a moment—and in fact it will do that in the end...
  - But that is not His agenda at this time.
  - Until the appointed day comes, rather than sending His servants in with a sword, He sends them in with the gospel of reconciliation.
  - He even allows His servants to be shamefully treated and abused—as He Himself was treated when He came—
    - but He does not allow them to be cut off from His kingdom.
- Really, heaven is simply God’s home—it is where He dwells.
  - It is not a place with physical coordinates because God is a spirit and cannot be contained in space.
    - We need to understand that.
    - When people die and go to heaven, they depart to be with Christ—and I suppose that is a place because He now has a human body—
      - But the main feature is that it is the place where we are truly at home with the Lord of glory, in the enjoyment of His glorious and magnificent presence.
      - It is here that we see Him fully as He is in all of His kindness and goodness—for He is pure kindness with His family.
  - Presently, we are accustomed to seeing Him dealing with our rebellious world which is constantly trying to overthrow His rule...
    - So we see His wrath and curse and we see death and all kinds of affliction that He sends to judge us and to restrain us...
    - But His crushing, final judgement does not come until the last day because until that day, He is patiently waiting for all His elect to be gathered in to His house.

- And so, as this time, He sends His servants out to establish His kingdom,
  - Again, not with swords and spears, but with an authoritative call to repent and enter His house where there is eternal joy and provision.

This is one of the ways that Islam radically differs from Christianity.

- Islam endeavours to establish a military state, the kingdom of Allah by force,
  - but Christianity seeks to establish the house of God, the church, the kingdom of heaven, by the preaching of the gospel.
  - God's servants are filled with love and joy in this house and plead with others to come and enter the kingdom before it is too late.
- This is also the great difference between revolution and reformation.
  - Revolution occurs when a group of people arise and try to change society according to their agenda by force and deception.
  - Reformation occurs when the kingdom of God is preached and people turn to God and enter His house with joy as those who are coming home—returning to their creator where they belong.
- And in our passage today, we get to see what happened when heaven sent ambassadors to Philippi to establish a colony of heaven there.
  - In his letter to the Philippians, Paul reminds them that they are citizens of heaven.
    - As a colony of Rome, citizenship was very important to them.
    - Those who were in a colony were citizens of Rome, and the colony was considered to be a piece of the city of Rome itself in a different place.
    - Paul explains that the kingdom of Christ on earth is like that.
      - Those who are in His kingdom are citizens of heaven who are living on earth until God brings them home...
      - And then at the end of the world, God will establish heaven on earth so that we will enjoy His immediate presence here...
        - And that will mean that all of our enemies will be banished from earth and that the curse will be completely removed and we will enjoy God's presence and the glory of His love and power.
  - But Acts 16 shows us the marvellous things that we can expect about this kingdom while we remain on earth...
    - And it shows us what happens when heaven visits a place where God is not known.

TRANS> I want you to see first of all that...

**I. Heaven sends forth servants (ambassadors) to proclaim the way of salvation all over the world—just as was done at Philippi.**

- The king of heaven (King Jesus), who reigns in heaven, is the One Who sends them to establish colonies of heaven on earth.
- A. It is a demon possessed servant girl who is one of the first to point this out at Philippi—one of the first to recognize what is going on.

- Look at verse 16-17:
    - **Acts 16:16-17: Now it happened, as we went to prayer, that a certain slave girl possessed with a spirit of divination met us, who brought her masters much profit by fortune-telling. This girl followed Paul and us, and cried out, saying, “These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation.”**
1. This young girl was in bondage in at least two ways...
    - a. First, that she was possessed by a spirit of divination.
      - Literally, it says that she had a *python spirit*.
      - Python, according to Greek mythology, was a giant snake or dragon that guarded the oracular sanctuary at Delphi until it was slain by the god Apollo.
        - Then Apollo was thought to be embodied in the snake and to inspire his female devotees who were called pythonesses so that they had the power to foretell events—
          - They were fortune tellers.
      - So this young woman at Philippi was actuated by an evil spirit, a demon, that dictated ambiguous answers to those who consulted her.
        - Of course people love this sort of thing because it gratifies their desire to know the future.
        - Also, magic is often combined with oracles and used to protect a person from misfortune, to attack another person or put curses on them, to win someone over, or to secure oracular utterances about the future.
        - Pliny observed that “There is in fact no one who is not afraid of being cursed by terrible imprecations.”
      - So this young woman was possessed by this demon which really means that she was enslaved to it!
        - It would carry her about and speak through her so that she did not even have full control of her own body.
    - b. But she was also enslaved in a second way—she was also a slave to human masters.
      - There was a lot of money to be made from telling fortunes,
        - so she had some men who had made her their slave—and they made a lot of money by using her to tell fortunes!
        - Then, as now, divination was a big business.
          - We are told that she brought in a lot of profit for them.
      - So she was in bondage to Satan and to man!
        - She was oppressed on the inside and on the outside!

TRANS> But she did have access to information that others missed...

2. She—or rather the spirit within her—recognized who Paul and the others were and why they were there.
  - And she got it totally right!
    - **Acts 16:17: “These men are servants of the Most High God who proclaim to us the way of salvation.”**
  - It is actually quite common in the New Testament for demons to be the first to recognize when heaven visits their region!
    - When Jesus arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, as recorded in Mark 5, He was immediately met by a demon possessed man who ran up to Him and worshipped Him and identified Him,
      - **Mark 5:7: “What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I implore You by God that You do not torment me.”**
  - It is amazing how immediately demons are able to identify Jesus and His servants.
    - In Luke 4:41, we are told that it was very common for them to do so:
      - **“demons also came out of many, crying out and saying, “You are the Christ, the Son of God!” And He, rebuking them, did not allow them speak, for they knew that He was the Christ.**
    - One demon after another was able to identify Jesus!
      - Most people struggled to understand who Jesus was...
        - Even Jesus’ own disciples took a long while before they made such a full confession of faith as these demons did...
          - They knew Him as soon as He came near!
    - I have actually experienced something like this in my own ministry.
      - in the Dal Student Union building where an Asian girl approached me,
        - explaining that she had three spirit guides that her grandfather had given her, and that they had told her to come and talk to me because I could show her the way of salvation.

TRANS> So you see that even though most people at Philippi took very little notice of Paul and the other missionaries,

- They had no idea who they were...
  - This young woman—or the demon within her—knew exactly who they were and made it quite clear that she did!

B. Consider what a marvellous truth it was that she uttered about them!

1. They were indeed servants of the Most High God.
  - He is indeed God over all, the true and living God, the supreme God!
    - He is the sovereign God who has all power and authority.
    - He alone, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit is the self-existing One who inhabits eternity with no beginning and no ending.

- He alone is the source of life and has our future in His hands.
  - Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke were not the servants of some god of the Greeks—which were all demons—demons who were created by God and had followed Satan in his rebellion—
    - They were servants—indeed slaves—*douloi*—of the Most High God.
2. And they had been sent by God to Philippi on a marvellous mission!
- They had come to town to show the inhabitants of that city the way of salvation!
    - Just think what a grand thing this was!
      - These men were ambassadors of the God’s Son in heaven!
      - They had come into this dark city that was dead in trespasses and sins to tell them how to be saved!
      - They had come to tell them how to be reconciled to the living God—not by works of personal righteousness or by rituals,
        - but by faith in Jesus Christ who alone is able to take away our sins and justify us!
        - by faith in Jesus who also gives the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him to transform us into God’s servants!
    - Just think—we are talking about deliverance from hell!
      - We are talking about complete cleansing from guilt!
      - We are talking about an everlasting inheritance in God’s house!
      - We are talking about salvation, not by our own work, but by the work of the Son of God who loved us and gave Himself for us!
      - We are talking about a new life of joy and fullness in union with the true and living God.
      - We are talking about a kingdom that will never be destroyed...
        - The kingdom of the Most High God!
3. The work had already begun in Philippi
- a. As we saw last week, Lydia and her entire household had been saved!
    - They were the first spiritual life in Philippi.
    - They were an oasis of life in the spiritual desert of Philippi!
    - People ought to have been running to this salvation!
      - Oh how they ought to have been eager for it—if only they had not been so blinded by sin.
  - b. My friends, you ought to be running to this salvation!
    - It is here in Halifax you know! It is right here with us!
    - Jesus has sent me and all the other ministers in our city who preach the gospel here to declare the kingdom of heaven...
    - To call you to be reconciled to God and to enter the kingdom of Christ through faith in Him and His work!

- You don't want to miss this!
- God's kingdom is here! Come and enter while you can!

TRANS> And now as we move on, I want you to notice a couple of things that happen when heaven comes.

## **II. When heaven comes, both Satan and oppression must go.**

- Let's look at each of these in turn...

### **A. First, when the kingdom of heaven comes, Satan the deceiver must go.**

1. Even though the demon in this girl was indeed speaking the truth, we are told in verse 18 that Paul was greatly annoyed about this publicity.

- In this, he was very much like his Master who was also grieved when the demons kept announcing who He was.
- There are different ideas about why this is so, but one reason is certainly a factor is the fact that pretended friendship is one of Satan's most dangerous ploys!
  - He is the kind who speaks fine words, but has a sword in his hand to stab you with.
  - He appears as an angel of light—as there to help people—when he is really there to destroy them.

a. Just think about how common this is...

1) It began in the garden.

- Satan did not appear to Eve with a red suit and a forked tail to torment her—
  - He appeared as a concerned loving friend with sweet talk who wanted to help.
- He gained her trust as one who was truly interested in her and then led her away from the Lord to death!
  - He convinced her that it would be in her best interests to eat the forbidden fruit because then she would be like God!
    - Instead of God deciding good and evil, she could take that place!
    - She could decide for herself what was good for her and evil for her.
    - She would be like God instead of a servant of God.

2) This was also the device that Satan used so effectively when the kingdom reached its glory under David.

- After David's son Solomon was established on the throne, he began to have lots of friends from the nations...
  - And these friends wanted to make alliances with Solomon—to be his friend and helper.

- And Solomon fell for this—he married pagan wives to secure those alliances and by this he brought idolatry into the house of God.
    - It appeared that he was strengthening the kingdom by entering into all of these alliances,
      - but he was rather bringing about its destruction.
- 3) Paul was well aware of this device of Satan...
- In his second letter to the Corinthians, he explains how false apostles and deceitful workers transform themselves into apostles of Christ...
    - just as Satan transforms himself into an angel of light—all in order to deceive people!
    - Certainly this is one of the most common ploys that is used by Satan today—
      - Men come in the name of Christ who are deceivers—men who pretend to care for Christ and His people but who actually come to lead them away from the gospel.
      - It is really quite shocking to see how common they are and how much success they have!
        - Why do they even want to go into the ministry when they don't even believe the gospel?
- b. And so you see the danger of allowing this demon possessed girl to go on like this...as if she were a friend...
- 1) For one thing, Paul seems to be trying to keep a low profile as Jesus often did.
    - He knew that Philippi did not welcome Jews or their religion, and that they would not be thrilled with the gospel—
      - so he behaved himself in a wise manner—ministering the gospel as he had opportunity.
  - 2) But for another thing—the demon in this girl wanted to appear as one who was all out to help people find salvation—just like these missionaries.
    - This servant girl was in the business of helping people—
      - People would seek her out for help.
      - And now she was ready to help them find salvation!
    - It was just one big happy team!
      - You know, after all, we are all trying to get to the same place, aren't we?
  - 3) The Asian girl that identified me as one having the message of salvation was actually deceived by her spirit guides...
    - They knew that I was very likely to speak to her about the Lord,
      - so they approached her before I did and told her to talk to me about salvation because I could show her the way.

- But as soon as I began to speak to her, her friends told her that they could not be saved—which is true—Jesus did not die for demons...
- Then she said, “I cannot betray them,” and refused to turn to Christ and His salvation.
- I began to proclaim the Lordship of Christ and how He is God and they are in rebellion, and she told me they departed because they did not like what I said, and it frightened them.
  - I said, “So what hinders you now?”
  - She said, “I cannot betray them.”
  - And I said, “But they are gone.”
  - And she said, “Oh yes, but they will come back—they just went away because of what you were saying.”
  - And so by acting as if they were her true allies, they deceived her and kept her from coming to Christ.

TRANS> And so you see that we must not make an alliance with Satan or with false teachers...

- They are there to deceive.
    - That is why Paul is grieved about them and why we ought to be grieved about them and must not align ourselves with them.
2. So it is not surprising to see that Paul casts out the demon.
- Look at all of verse 18:
    - **Acts 16:18: And this she did for many days. But Paul, greatly annoyed, turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her.” And he came out that very hour.**
  - a. My brothers and sisters, this reminds us of a very excellent truth...
    - That Satan, the strong man, has been bound so that he cannot continue to deceive the nations.
      - That is why it is the kingdom of God has entered into nations where it did not go before Christ came.
      - Jesus said that He had bound the strong man, and in Revelation 20 we are told the reason—that he should deceive the nations no more.
      - This does not mean that every individual will be immune to Satan’s deceptions—far from it...
        - But it means that elect people will come to Christ from all nations—just as we see before our eyes!
        - The people who sat in darkness and were cut off have seen a great light!
    - b. This also means that if you are a child of God, the wicked one will not be able to deceive you.



- Oh yes, perhaps in this or that matter when the Lord wishes to chasten you—but he will not be able to deceive you so that you turn away from the Lord.
  - Those who are truly saved are not available to him because Christ has set us free—the wicked one does not touch us as John puts it.
  - We need to fight and we need to be aware of Satan’s devices, but we also need to go forward with confidence,
    - knowing that he will not prevail against us to bring us back into bondage again.
    - Christ has all authority over him.
- c. That our Lord drives out Satan when His kingdom comes, also means that God’s promise to those who seek is true.
- People might be concerned that they cannot come to God because Satan would deceive them...
    - But the truth is that no one has ever been deceived that did not in fact want to be deceived.
    - Jesus promises that if we truly seek, we will find!
      - He says that no one who comes to Him will be cast out—so there is nothing to worry about!
- d. And finally, that the Lord drives out Satan when His kingdom comes, shows us that at the last day, Satan will be utterly cast out...
- For now, he is unable to deceive the elect so that the gospel may reach them—
    - but at the last day Satan will be entirely banished from the earth as will all of those who are in league with him.
    - The ancient promise is that Jesus will crush his head.
      - Satan will never again be allowed to enter God’s house or to deceive us.
      - That is the glorious hope we have in Christ!

TRANS> The casting out of Satan from this servant girl points us to the reality that when the kingdom comes, Satan must go.

- But there is a second thing that must go as well...

B. When the kingdom of heaven comes, the oppression must also go.

1. As with this poor girl’s masters, there are great wages in this world that are obtained through oppression...
  - What I mean is that in this wicked sinful fallen world, there are many who get rich by oppressing others—by using them—by unjust means!
  - The experts say that there is more human trafficking going on in the world than ever before!

- There is prostitution, pornography, drugs and gang warfare to which many are in bondage and by which others are getting very rich...
2. And even apart from these very blatant forms of oppression, there are those who take advantage of others in thousands of other ways—
- Just plain selfishness you know—we are all oppressors—
    - Cheating people in sales by exaggerating the merits of what you sell,
    - Making promises to others that you do not keep—look at all the broken marriage covenants,
    - Putting in less than an honest day's work,
    - Mothers hanging out on the internet when they could be serving their families,
    - Men indulging themselves in pornography as if women were mere objects,
    - Voting for a candidate who will give you more,
    - Manipulating others by putting on a pity party instead of working...
      - The list goes on and on!
        - God complains of those who “eat up the flesh of My people.”
        - That is what we do—we are vicious piranhas.
3. But when the kingdom came to Philippi,
- This servant girl was no longer able to be used to profit her masters...
    - At least the high wages they obtained by her were taken away.
    - In this we see heaven's opposition to oppression and its profits.
  - Jesus insists upon a new way—
    - In His kingdom, we learn that it is more blessed to give than to receive!
    - In His kingdom, instead of worrying about what we are getting and being filled with covetousness,
      - we learn, by His grace, to delight in loving others and giving to them—just as Jesus has so greatly loved us and given Himself for us.
    - It is the way of His kingdom!
      - His true disciples are known by the love that they have for one another!
      - It is a beautiful kingdom my dear brothers and sisters!
  - I do not mean to suggest that this particular girl was necessarily delivered from being a slave to her masters...
    - It is unlikely that she was.
      - But the fact that she was no longer able to make them rich because the demon was cast out of her is symbolic of the fact that Christ opposes the wages of oppression...
      - He blocked these men from making a profit in that way,

- and if this servant girl did in fact turn to Christ when Satan was cast out,
  - she was so enveloped by the love of Christ and had such a hope of glory in Christ’s kingdom that though her masters continued to abuse her, she considered herself free in Christ.
  - What was it to her if she must endure a few years of hardship in this world when she had the hope of eternal life in God’s house of love?
  - For all intents and purposes, she was delivered from oppression and so are all of us who come to Jesus!
    - Both from being oppressors and from being oppressed.

TRANS> And this brings us to the third thing we learn here in Acts 16...

### III. Once Heaven has taken us, we cannot be overthrown.

- Christ has us forever and nobody can snatch us out of His hand—for He has all authority.
- A. You see that every effort is made to overthrow Paul and Silas—to break them.
1. The masters of the servant girl are furious because their lucrative “product” (I mean the girl) has been ruined!
    - There is a play on words that when the demon “went out” from the girl, these men’s hope of profit by her also “went out.”
    - They had no interest in Paul and Silas until this happened!
      - People will always react when their income is touched!
        - It doesn’t matter if a person is a welfare recipient or a tycoon making a fortune in the stock market...
        - Mess with their income and they will mess with you!
      - You see in verse 19 it says “**but when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone**” they took action.
  2. And so they turn in violent, crafty malice against Paul and Silas.
    - **Acts 16:19b: they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities.**
    - If there is something about these men to admire, it is their cleverness in the way they present the charges against Paul and Silas...
      - a. First, they take only them because they are the leaders and they are obviously Jews—Timothy was half Greek and Luke was Greek.
        - They do this because they want to play up to the prejudice of the crowd against Jews...

- Jews were not very popular at this time—as I mentioned last week—Claudius had banished them from Rome right at this time for being trouble makers.
  - It may even be that the trouble was caused by the controversies about Christ in the synagogues at Rome...
    - but whatever of that—these men play up to Roman pride and the prevailing anti-Semitism to get revenge on Paul and Silas.
  - They drag them with violence into the marketplace—the agora—where marketers sold their wares, where socialising occurred, where commerce and government were done, and most importantly for them, where court was held.
- b. Now look at the masterful way they present the charges in verse 20...
- They say:
    - **v. 20: “These men, being Jews, [see—playing up to the anti-Semitism] exceedingly trouble our city [but it was really their bank account that they were concerned about],**
    - **v. 21: “and they teach customs which are not lawful for us, being Romans [an appeal to Roman pride], to receive or observe.”**
      - There was a law against propagating a religion that was not officially recognized by Rome—and Claudius had indeed just banished the Jews from Rome—so all this was in the headlines.
  - But just think how foolish and unjust it is to use custom and tradition to oppose the will of God!
    - What good is custom and tradition if it is used to trump the commandments of God?
      - Yet, many appeal to tradition in the church or in their family or their nation for this very purpose.
      - But this certainly had its effect on the crowd and their rulers!

TRANS> You see how effective their whole approach was...

- It is amazing how ingenious men can be when they want revenge because of material loss!
3. Both the crowds and the rulers are greatly enraged against Paul and Silas
- a. We are told first that the multitude rose up against them!
    - They had been moved by what these men had said about these Jewish strangers, and they were ready to start a riot.
  - b. The magistrate, who should have conducted an orderly trial, saw no need for a trial...
    - 1) They tear off Paul and Silas’s clothes, putting them to open shame, and order that they be beaten with rods.
      - This was a common Roman punishment.

- And the Romans did not limit the number of blows to 40 as the Jews did.
- Without trial, they are happy to lay many stripes upon these two men—
  - striking them again and again to teach them a lesson and to make an example of them that “your doctrine is not welcome here.”
  - It is hard to imagine the pain and the humiliation that was associated with such a punishment.
- The fact is that no Roman citizen was to be brought to public shame by such a beating—shame was a huge issue for the Romans—and they did not know that Paul and Silas were both Roman citizens.
  - They did not bother to ask.

TRANS> But the shameful treatment of Paul and Silas does not end with this beating.

- You might think that this would be enough, but apparently the authorities want to do more to these men... for...

2) They add to their stripes imprisonment.

- Verse 23-24 explain:
  - **Acts 16:23-24: And when they had laid many stripes on them, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to keep them securely. Having received such a charge, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.**
- So here they are with smarting backs,
  - now put into the deepest (and no doubt worst) part of the jail and fastened in stocks...
    - Even these stocks were very often designed to inflict pain on the prisoner by spreading his legs apart so that they would cramp.
    - There were ordinarily no beds either—they were just put on the floor or up against a wall.

TRANS> But there is something very excellent here!

B. Despite all of this ill treatment, the kingdom of heaven remained in these men!

1. Their bodies were certainly not in heaven, but their hearts were!

- As I said about the servant girl, even if she had to stay with her cruel masters and perhaps bear worse treatment than when she brought them great profits,
  - if the kingdom of God was in her heart, she had reason for great joy in her inheritance!

2. And here you see that despite all that the Romans did to Paul and Silas, they could not take the joy of the kingdom away from them!

- Here they are, with all of their injuries in a most inhospitable place—

- And what are they doing? Cursing? Complaining? Silent?
- No, verse 25 says:
  - **Acts 16:25: But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.**
    - They know that they are still citizens of heaven and belong to Christ!
    - They know what He suffered for them—far more than they are now suffering.
    - They know the hope that they have in Christ—of an eternal inheritance in heaven.
  - Truly, they have brought heaven with them to Philippi and not only to Philippi, but even to this wretched prison cell!
    - My brothers and sisters, you can be brought to some miserable places in this world—
      - but you can take heaven and its joy and hope with you wherever you go and into whatever circumstances you find yourself.

### 3. God's servants are invincible!

- You can destroy their bodies, but you can't steal their souls or their joy!
- John Chrysostom, who also was persecuted by the Romans—said this when the emperor threatened him with exile if he remained a Christian:
  - “You CAN'T exile me; the whole world is my father's house.”
    - “Then I will kill you,” said the emperor.
  - “You CAN'T,” said John, “for my life is hid with Christ in God.”
    - “Then I will take away your treasures.”
  - “You CAN'T, for my treasure is in heaven.”
    - “Then I will drive you away from men and you will have no friends left!”
  - “You CAN'T, for I have a friend in heaven from whom I cannot be separated. I defy you, for there is nothing that you can do to hurt me!”

TRANS> Brothers and sisters, how encouraging it is to have such examples that show us the power of God's kingdom that is within us if we are in Christ!

- But the Lord does not stop here in showing us the power of His kingdom!

### C. He also teaches us here that no one can bind His servants apart from His will.

1. Understand that it was His will for them to be brought into these troubles else it would not have happened...
  - God is not limited in His power.
  - It was His purpose for them to suffer these things for His glory and they knew that...
    - But cheerfully bearing this ill treatment, they showed that the power and joy of His kingdom within them—
      - the kingdom they had come to proclaim at Philippi.

- It was God's will for them to be bound up until now...
2. But now He had designed to show that He is able to deliver His servants.
- His servants cannot be held by chains of any kind when He is ready to release them...
    - And so verse 26 tells us how God freed them!
      - **Acts 16:26: 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.**
    - Earthquakes were often considered to be theophanies by the Romans...
      - And that is exactly what this earthquake was!
        - It was a manifestation of God, vindicating His faithful servants!
        - It was no ordinary earthquake—for it shook loose the doors of the prison as well as the chains of the prisoners!
        - This was an earthquake that was designed to show the hand of the Lord in it!
    - It teaches us that the Lord can free us from whatever man does to bind us.
      - It also reminds us that He will indeed free us from all that binds us!
      - My brothers and sisters, there is freedom from bondage in God's kingdom!
        - The kingdom of God cannot be bound by man!
          - They keep trying, but it keeps on going and it keeps on spreading!
          - Thanks be to God!
            - This is your kingdom if you are in Christ Jesus!

**Conclusion:** How thankful you ought to be!

- Here is the kingdom of heaven—God's house!
  - It cannot be broken, it cannot be bound.
- Heaven visited Philippi.
  - God brought it there when He brought His servants there!
  - Heaven has also visited Halifax.
    - It is in all of us who know the Lord.
- Next week we will see how the jailor was brought into the kingdom...
  - but for now—let us rejoice that God has brought His kingdom to us and that we may enter into it and be blessed forever and ever!