

Paul's Vision of the Man of Macedonia / Lydia's Conversion in Philippi



What was the best idea or invention you ever came up with? How did it turn out?



Acts 16:6-15

⁶Paul and his companions traveled throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been kept by the Holy Spirit from preaching the word in the province of Asia. ⁷When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. ⁸So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas. ⁹During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." ¹⁰After Paul had seen the vision, we got ready at once to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

¹¹From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day on to Neapolis. ¹²From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

¹³On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. ¹⁵When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.



1. Note the change from "they" (v. 8) to "we" (v. 10): How does this relate to Luke 1:3-4?
2. How does this closed door point to another opportunity?
3. Compare verse 13 with 14:1 and 17:2. What does the lack of a synagogue in Philippi indicate about the Jewish community there? How did that affect Paul's strategy for mission?
4. What do you make of Lydia's career and conversion?



16:6-7 the Holy Spirit / the Spirit of Jesus. Luke clearly identifies the ongoing work of Jesus with the agency of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the apostles.

16:7 would not allow them to. Why Jesus would not allow Paul and Silas and Timothy to preach in Asia and Bithynia is not given. Later on, the apostle Peter was in contact with churches in that area, so they were not left bereft of the Gospel (1 Peter 1:1).

16:8 Troas. An important seaport on the Aegean Sea. While it appears Paul did not do any

evangelistic work here at this time, he did do so later on (2 Corinthians 2:12).

16:9 Macedonia. This area of northern Greece had been the dominant power under Alexander the Great in the fourth century B.C.

16:10 we. Verses 10-17 is the first of three passages in Acts written in the first person (20:5-21:18; 27:1-28:16), indicating that Luke himself was accompanying Paul at these points.

16:11-12 In two days they arrived at Macedonia, landing at Neapolis. Philippi was a short distance to the west.

16:12 the leading city of that district. The Greek here is uncertain. Since Philippi was neither the largest city nor the capital of the province, it probably should read simply, "a city of the first district of Macedonia" (GNB). Macedonia was a Roman province divided into four districts.

16:13 Ten men were required in order to form a synagogue. The fact that there was no synagogue in Philippi indicates how small the Jewish population was. **outside the city gate to the river.** The Jews may have been forbidden to meet inside the city limits, or they may have wanted to be near a river to perform their ceremonial washings.

16:14 Lydia. Macedonian women enjoyed far more freedom and opportunities than many of their counterparts elsewhere. Lydia was a businesswoman involved in selling purple cloth, a luxury item indicating that she was a woman of wealth. **Thyatira.** A city in the province of Asia noted for its dyeing industry. Evidence indicates that there was a Jewish community in Thyatira, which probably influenced Lydia toward faith in the God of the Jews. Lydia demonstrated her faith in Jesus as the Messiah by baptism and by offering hospitality to the missionaries (v. 15).

16:15 the members of her household. It was customary for children and servants to embrace the faith of their master or mistress (see Acts 11:14).

Caring Time

1. How did the Lord open your heart to respond to the Gospel? Who did he use as part of the process?

2. Where do you have an "open door" for ministry now: In your home? School? Work? Community? How will you take advantage of it?