

- A Study in Acts -

Chapter Sixteen – Second Journey of Paul

ACTS 16:13-15:

We began this journey with Paul and Silas in **Antioch of Syria**; they then traveled through the rest of **Syria** and through the region of **Cilicia** strengthening **the Bodies of Christ** along the way. When they had come to the area of the two cities of **Lystra and Derbe**, they will pick up young Timothy to travel with them. They delivered the decrees to these cities which strengthened them to a productive unity. From here they will travel to two new areas of Asia Minor: **Phrygia and Galatia**. Luke does not record anything about these visits and Paul will not return to these regions until **Chapter 19**.

Passing through the region of Mysia (having been forbidden by the Spirit of God to go into Asia and Bithynia at this time), Paul and his group have come to **Troas**. Here at Troas, Paul will have a vision encouraging him to go to Macedonia and bring the Gospel. As they determine to go to Macedonia, we learn that Luke joins them.

They set out across the Aegean Sea and cross with relative ease, stopping at the island of **Samothrace**, and the next day arriving at **Neapolis**, the seaport town for Philippi. From Neapolis they head straight to **Philippi**, the chief city of this region.



Note: Before we begin to look into the work of Paul here in Philippi, I would like to share with you, from his own words, some things to consider as we look at the events in Philippi, note:

Philippians 4:8-9 “Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things *are* noble, whatever things *are* just, whatever things *are* pure, whatever things *are* lovely, whatever things *are* of good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there is* anything praiseworthy—**meditate on these things.** ⁹ **The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.”**

As Paul writes back to the Christians established by the preaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ here in Philippi, he reminds them of all the properties necessary to learn, and states that they have witnessed all of them in his actions among them. We will in the next lessons begin to look at three examples of these events to be noticed and recalled by these brethren and you and me.

Text #1:

Acts 16:13-15 “**And on the Sabbath day we went out of the city to the riverside, where prayer was customarily made; and we sat down and spoke to the women who met *there*.** ¹⁴ **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.** ¹⁵ **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.”**

Example #1: Paul to Bring God’s Word to Religious People!

It was always Paul’s custom to go into a city and enter the synagogue to preach the Gospel. So, this is not a new practice; however, it is at this point that I would like to point out that Paul never allowed someone who did not comprehend his understanding of the righteousness of God, to stop him from sharing it regardless and nor should we!!!

First, since we see that Paul did not enter the synagogue, we have to take notice of the fact the Philippi did not have one. Synagogues existed in the known world everywhere there were enough Jewish men to maintain one; as we note that there is not one here, we can also deduce that there was only a minor presence of Jews in Philippi.

Since there was not synagogue, Paul would have inquired and found out where the limited number of Jews in the city would be assembled (the true meaning of the word synagogue), down by the riverside. It is here that he will come in contact with Lydia.

Lydia: She is residing in Philippi as a seller of the purple garments for which Thyatira was famous (her native city located in Asia Minor, and spoken of as one of the seven churches of Asia – **Revelation 2:18-29**). She is obviously wealthy in that she has a home here and servants, but also, she is a devout woman who seeks God regularly.

Opened her Heart:

There has been no end to the misuse of this statement in the context.

First, take note of the fact that Paul has done nothing here except speak words to her (**Vs. 13**).

Second, Luke's statement here only insinuates that she is absorbing the material in her heart (the source of all that we truly believe and are motivated to accomplish – **Romans 10:9-10**). This is no more mystical or miraculous than Paul's statement to the Christians at Corinth, note:

1 Corinthians 3:6 “**I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase.**”

God's word always finds the hearts that are truly contrite and willing to have the seed planted – **Mathew 5:3; 13:8, 23**.

Luke's words here are contrasting! He is simply recognizing an honest heart from the vast number of dishonest hearts, especially among the Jews, who have heard; yet the Gospel's seed found no home.

In **Matthew 13:14-15; Mark 4:12; Luke 8:10; John 12:40-41; and Acts 28:26-27**, both Jesus and Paul would quote from **Isaiah 6:9-10**, note:

Isaiah 6:9-10 “**And He said, “Go, and tell this people: ‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand; Keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’**”

¹⁰ “**Make the heart of this people dull, And their ears heavy, And shut their eyes; Lest they see with their eyes, And hear with their ears, And understand with their heart, And return and be healed.**”

In every case, this is spoken of to the Jews and their usual unwillingness to open their hearts to God's message; Lydia is being noted by Luke as a contrast to the norm and the recipient of the underlined portions of this quote from Isaiah (remember that this entire letter is written to Theophilus, who himself being a proselyte, would understand the contrast). In addition, we know that it could not be anything or in any way different than the way that the Gospel has come to everyone else up to this point, without making God a God of partiality (which His own word demands He is not – **2 Chronicles 19:7; Job 34:19; Acts 10:34; 15:9; Galatians 2:6; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25; 1 Peter 1:17**).

This establishes one of the Divine rules of exegesis; we cannot understand or create a doctrine that in fact is contrary to other portions of the universal revelation. Remember, it is not of private interpretation (**2 Peter 1:20**); which demands then, that we can only understand the passage as Divinely intended and simply heed it (**2 Peter 1:19**).

Since we have already established that any doctrine created by misunderstanding this passage to teach a Divine intervention and special selection process, it would put it at odds with the instruction that God is not partial. In addition, it would make God to blame for those in the world

who do not obey the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Opposed to – **Mark 16:15-16**) and make it of no consequence to bring the Gospel to the world, thus denying the power of the Gospel (Opposed to – **Romans 1:16-17**).

Were Baptized:

At the conclusion of Paul's instruction to Lydia, she and her household ("**Women who met there**" – **Vs. 13**) were baptized (which also shows that they were present during the instruction).

Everyone in this conclusive act has been capable to accurately hear and comprehend the message of the redemption of Jesus Christ (thus not babies – I almost feel that it is superfluous to have to say it, but we all know that it has been used to instruct infant baptism); which has led them to this final act of faith and addition to **the Body of Christ (Acts 2:47; 5:14; Galatians 3:26-27)**. This additionally establishes the Body here in Philippi in these first converts.

Note: As we go back to the beginning thought of this portion of Paul's work in Philippi; he did not shy away from these women because they already understood God's revelation different than his, instead he practiced the very thing he preached and that we need to truly take to heart, note:

2 Timothy 2:24-26 "And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, ²⁵ in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth, ²⁶ and *that* they may come to their senses *and escape* the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him to *do* his will."

Next: "Good Works in the Face of Adversity!"