

Acts 16 The Macedonian Vision

Now Paul also came to Derbe and to Lystra. And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek, 2 and he was well spoken of by the brothers and sisters who were in Lystra and Iconium. 3 Paul wanted this man to leave with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek. 4 Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the ordinances for them to follow which had been determined by the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. 5 So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.

6 They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, after being forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia; 7 and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not allow them; 8 and passing by Mysia, they went down to Troas. 9 And a vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and pleading with him, and saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us." 10 When he had seen the vision, we immediately sought to leave for Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.

11 So after setting sail from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and on the following day to Neapolis; 12 and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia, a Roman colony; and we were spending some days in this city. 13 And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were thinking that there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled.

14 A woman named Lydia was listening; she was a seller of purple fabrics from the city of Thyatira, and a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul. 15 Now when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

16 It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave woman who had a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing great profit to her masters by fortune-telling. 17 She followed Paul and us and cried out repeatedly, saying, "These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you a way of salvation." 18 Now she continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and he turned and said to the spirit, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!" And it came out at that very moment.

19 But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was suddenly gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities, 20 and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, "These men, Jews as they are, are causing our city trouble, 21 and they are proclaiming customs that are not lawful for us to accept or to practice, since we are Romans."

Paul and Silas Imprisoned

22 The crowd joined in an attack against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them and proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods. 23 When they

had struck them with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely; 24 and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

25 Now about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them; 26 and 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 unfastened. 27 When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, thinking that the prisoners had escaped. 28 But Paul called out with a loud voice, saying, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!" 29 And the jailer asked for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas; 30 and after he brought them out, he said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

The Jailer Converted

31 They said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." 32 And they spoke the word of God to him together with all who were in his house. 33 And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household. 34 And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and was overjoyed, since he had become a believer in God together with his whole household.

35 Now when day came, the chief magistrates sent their officers, saying, "Release those men."

36 And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, "The chief magistrates have sent word that you be released. So come out now and go in peace." 37 But Paul said to them, "After beating us in public without due process men who are Romans they threw us into prison; and now they are releasing us secretly? No indeed! On the contrary, let them come in person and lead us out." 38 The officers reported these words to the chief magistrates. And they became fearful when they heard that they were Romans, 39 and they came and pleaded with them, and when they had led them out, they repeatedly asked them to leave the city. 40 They left the prison and entered the house of Lydia, and when they saw the brothers and sisters, they encouraged them and departed.

Helpful insights

1. Paul makes a special connection with Timothy that lasts a lifetime.
2. Even though there was gentile blood in Timothy, Paul saw in this young man a quality that required a special investment.
3. Circumcising Timothy gave him acceptance in the Synagogue for the Jews.
4. This evangelistic team on mission encouraged the believers with the instructions from the big boys in Rome.
5. This was a great time of growth for the early church.
6. What do you think the term the 'Spirit of Jesus' is and how did it instruct the disciples?
7. What is a 'vision of the night'?
8. The message contained in the vision, was a request for help from the evangelistic team who made haste to get to them quickly.
9. The team went down to the river to pray and they began to share the gospel with

some workers.

10. How did the Lord open the heart of Lydia so as to respond to the message from Paul?
11. Why was Lydia baptised straight away?
12. Why did Lydia use religious service to seek approval and affirmation?
13. The slave girl who was demonised was making a scene and preaching a message,
14. Even though it was true it disturbed Paul. Why?
15. This girl was a fortune teller who was advertising the gospel to the people, but it still made Paul cross!
16. What is a spirit of divination?
17. Was this girl able to see that she was being abused by her masters?
18. What is the way of salvation?
19. Notice Paul spoke to the spirit, not the woman, when he cast out the spirit in the girl.
20. The girl, now without the spirit of divination working in her, was unable to future tell or be exploited
21. Paul said, 'I command you come out of her' and at once it left.
22. Her masters recognised that she was no longer profitable to them, so they had Paul and Silas arrested.
23. Their charge was, they were throwing the city into confusion.
24. When the gospel is preached it always challenges those who do not want to hear from God.
25. The crowd play their part in the arrest despite the fact that they were initially supportive of the message
26. How quickly things change!
27. While in prison, at midnight, Paul and Silas were praising God despite being in prison. God answers their prayers and opened the prison doors and well-being fell upon the prisoners.
28. The inner prison was reflective of high security, God used an earthquake to set these captives free!
29. The jailer thinks the prisoners have escaped and prepares to take his life, but Paul's intervention saves him.
30. The jailer takes care of Paul and Silas injuries and bathes their wounds.
31. Praise celebration and prayer in the storms of life, bring in to those situations our victory in the battle.
32. The impact on the jailer and his family brings them to salvation. God works in mysterious ways.
33. Has anyone ever asked you 'what must I do to be saved'? Would you know how to answer them? Paul says 'believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved'.
34. Believe what? Believe that Jesus is God's saviour!
35. The fruit of repentance, with regards to the jailer, is that they wait on Paul and Silas, even though they were held captive.
36. They were baptised at once, along with the family, just like Lydia.
37. It was the intention of the chief magistrates to move on without incident, but Paul is having none of it! Why?
38. The jailer could have died in vain!
39. Why is Paul unwilling to let the magistrates get away with this inappropriate act?
40. The magistrates are humbled as God humbles all enemies of the cross.
41. Lydia found a special place in the heart of the apostle Paul.