

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for December 13, 2015

The Conversion of Lydia
Acts 16:11-15

Acts 15:36-18:23 records Paul's second missionary journey which expanded the ministry to Greece. Those who joined Paul in travelling to Macedonia were Silas, who joined Paul in Antioch (Acts 15:40), Timothy, who joined Paul in Lystra (Acts 16:3), and Luke, who joined Paul in Troas (Acts 16:10).

1. The group sails to Philippi (16:11-12)

Philippi had a medical center, and it is likely that Luke was familiar with the city. Being a Roman colony provided special rights for its citizens and could be considered like a piece of Rome that was transplanted.

Samothrace is an island slightly smaller and more mountainous than Catalina. This stopover was independent from the Roman Empire at this time. The phrase "straight course" is a nautical term meaning they sailed with a favorable wind.

Neapolis was another 125 miles west of Samothrace and the port city of Philippi which was about ten miles inland along the Egnatian Way.

2. The gospel is spoken in Philippi (16:13)

Apparently, the Jewish population in Philippi was so small that there was no synagogue and only women. The Sabbath meeting was held on the Gangities River that ran through the city for the purpose of Jewish ceremonial washings.

Paul went first to a place where people would be the most like them and who had the most background in the truth, namely the Jewish people.

3. God's salvation comes to Philippi (16:14-15)

Lydia was from Thyatira in a region formerly known as the Kingdom of Lydia (c. 1200-546 B.C.). Thyatira, one of the seven churches addressed in Revelation (Revelation 2:18-29), was 150 miles southeast of Troas and well known as a source of purple dye.

Lydia was a successful businesswoman who imported high-end fabrics to the wealthy. As a "worshipper of God" she was a Gentile who had converted to Judaism (cf. Acts 13:43).

Lydia's conversion came through hearing (Romans 10:17). The use of the imperfect tense to describe her listening indicates attentiveness over a period of time.

By opening our heart, God creates the initiative to believe from within us. We have previously seen Luke point to God's work in salvation in the Book of Acts (13:48). God works through people plainly speaking the truth of Christ.

Lydia took the first step of obedience as a new believer in Christ in baptism. Lydia's household included all that were under her care, including servants. There is no reason to believe this included infant baptism. The only prerequisite for baptism is a belief in Jesus Christ and therefore there was no delay in the baptisms.

Lydia's use of the word "if" is a first class Greek condition, meaning that she had been viewed faithful as she extended her invitation. Those invited included at least Paul, Silas, Timothy and Luke, which indicates the size of her home.

In spite of their Jewish background, Paul and Silas gladly stayed in the home of a Gentile woman (cf. Peter in Acts 10:24-48). Lydia's home will become a center of faith in Philippi (Acts 16:40). Using our living area for the expansion of God's work is part of practicing hospitality (Romans 12:13).

May we serve the Lord faithfully with our life, resources and even our home.