

Exegetical Notes, Acts 16:6-15

“The Call Expands”

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Acts 16:6-15

Verses 6-8

Paul 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. ⁷ When they came to the border of Mysia, they tried to enter Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus would not allow them to. ⁸ So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas.

- Apparently, Paul’s desire and plan was to preach the word of God in the regions of Phrygia, Galatia, Mysia, and Bithynia. But this was not God’s plan for Paul’s ministry.
- The Holy Spirit put blocks in Paul’s way which prevented him from going into these areas. Exactly what blocks we do not know. Coincidental issues, which others would not have considered spiritual, hindered Paul’s moving into these areas.
- Paul’s attempt to follow this plan ended in the city of Troas.

Verses 9-10

During the night Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia standing and begging him, “Come over to Macedonia and help us.” ¹⁰ After 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. From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, and the next day we went on to Neapolis. ¹² From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district^[a] of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.

- While in Troas, Paul had a vision. He saw a man calling him to come into the Province of Macedonia, Greece. Paul assumed that this vision was God’s way of revealing His plan to Paul. Paul gave up his plan to preach in Asia

and made plans to go to Greece. He went to the city of Philippi, the chief city in Macedonia.

Verses 12-15

On 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. ¹⁴ One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. ¹⁵ When 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.

- As Philippi was a Greek city, there was not a large population of Jews there. Apparently, there was no synagogue there. Jews gathered to pray together outside the city beside the river on the Sabbath Day.
- Since it was Paul's habit to first go to the Jews with the Gospel whenever he entered a new city, he went to the place where Jews gathered to pray. He found a group of Jewesses there, and he spoke to them about Jesus.
- Among these women was a woman named Lydia. She was a business woman who dealt in purple cloth and she was a "worshiper of God." That means that she believed in YHWH but was probably not Jewish by birth.
- God spoke to Lydia through Paul's word. She accepted Jesus as her Savior. She and the members of her household were baptized. Her household would have been those who worked for her or were her slaves and her children, if she had children. As neither her husband nor her children are mentioned it is assumed that she was widowed and childless.
- She then invited Paul and his companions to stay in her house, which they agreed to do. This is of interest because it shows her devotion to Paul and to Jesus and because Paul, who was a Jew, agreed to stay in the household of a Greek woman.

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