

From Derbe to Philippi

Key Verse: *"After he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them."*
—Acts 16:10

Selected Scripture:
Acts 16:1-15

FOLLOWING THE JERUSALEM conference, Paul embarked upon a second missionary journey—this time without Barnabas—Silas accompanying him instead. "Then came he to Derbe and Lystra: and, behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, which was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek: Which was well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium. Him would Paul have to go forth

with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek."—Acts 16:1-3

Paul, Silas, and Timothy enjoyed much success in strengthening the faith of the brethren in the various churches, as well as helping their numbers increase. After visiting the regions of Phrygia and Galatia, they considered traveling to Asia Minor to spread the Gospel, but in some manner the Holy Spirit prevented them from doing so. Afterward, a vision came to Paul at night, as a man pleaded for him to visit Macedonia and minister to those residing there.—vss. 4-9

Our Key Verse illustrates the effect of divine providence upon the hearts and minds of believers who seek to know and do God's will. In response to the vision, Paul and his companions immediately departed for Macedonia, just north of Greece, thereby introducing the Gospel into Europe. It is believed that Luke the physician began to accompany Paul and his other companions around this time.

Arriving in Macedonia, the brethren traveled to Philippi, one of the chief cities in the area. On the Sabbath, they traveled to the riverside where they found a group of women, including one named Lydia, gathered in prayer. Paul spoke to them concerning the hopes of Israel which were fulfilled in Jesus Christ. This message fell upon receptive hearts as Lydia and her household received water baptism as an evidence of their conversion. Additionally, Lydia invited Paul and his companions to share the hospitality of her home. It does not appear it was immediately accepted, but at her "constraining" they utilized her residence for a period of time as a base of operations as they attended to the Lord's work.—vss. 12-15

An important lesson to be drawn from today's lesson is the fact that God will direct the supervision of the Gospel ministry as it pleases him. Through divine intervention by means of a vision, Paul was directed to travel to Europe, and at Philippi the first church on that continent was established. Subsequent events in the city, including Paul and Silas being arrested, beaten, put in prison, and then becoming instrumental in the conversion of the Philippian jailer and his household, demonstrate that whatever our experiences, if we are faithful to our calling, they will be to God's glory.—vss. 19-34

Let us strive always to have a proper attitude during our trials, as was so well expressed by Job. His testimony toward God was, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him."—Job 13:15 ■