

Offering of Oneself

Key Verse: *“When she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us.”*
—Acts 16:15

Selected Scripture:
Acts 16:6-15

TODAY’S LESSON OPENS

during the Apostle Paul’s second missionary journey. He is accompanied by Silas and Timothy, having just passed through the regions of Galatia and Mysia. They were forbidden from preaching the Gospel and not permitted by the Holy Spirit to enter Bithynia in Asia, but arrived at the city of Troas. Paul didn’t go where he desired, but determined he would go only where God had work for him to do. During the night he had a vision. “There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us. And 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 16:9,10) Paul was thus convinced that the Lord had called them to preach the Gospel there.

It is interesting to note that Paul’s vision was also an evidence that it was God’s long-term plan, and will, for the Gospel message to be spread toward the West—to Macedonia, Greece, Rome, and later to the rest of Europe—rather than to the East, through Asia Minor toward India and China.

“From Troas we put out to sea and sailed straight for Samothrace, continuing the next day on to Neapolis. From there we traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and the leading city of that district of Macedonia. And we stayed there several days.”—vss. 11,12, *New International Version*

“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. One of those listening was a woman named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth from the city of Thyatira.” (vss. 13,14, *NIV*) Like the apostle, she had sought out the place of prayer and now the Lord had rewarded her and answered her prayers by sending her the Truth for which she had hungered and thirsted. She was a devout woman who worshipped God according to the knowledge she had. When the Lord opened her heart, Lydia gave careful attention to Paul’s preaching and applied it to herself.

We are not told what Paul’s message was but we can be sure he had explained that Messiah had come, and had provided the ransom price for all the world as a sin offering and now, in addition, forgiveness, reconciliation to God, and a privilege of joint-heirship in the kingdom. All those who would accept the call and were faithful to it would be blessed, not only during the present time but they would also share in the future heavenly glory promised.

When Lydia and the members of her household were baptized, they told Paul and his friends that if they were convinced that she was a believer in the Lord, they should come and stay at her house. They did so, seeing that she desired an opportunity of receiving further scriptural instruction. In her own house she might not only hear their discussions, but could ask them questions; and she might have Paul and his friends to pray with her daily, and to bless her household. ■