

The Service of Lydia

Key Verses:
“A certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And 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 16:14,15

Selected Scripture:
Acts 16:11-15,40

THE AMAZING TRANSFORMATION of the Apostle Paul following his conversion on the road to Damascus attested to his courage and zeal in proclaiming the Gospel of Christ. Evident also was his patient endurance of persecution, deep insight into God’s plans for all, concern for the spiritual growth of the brethren, and an unflagging determination to be faithful to the Master’s cause. It is for these reasons and more that he could rightfully, but with humility, commend himself when he exhorted, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.”—I Cor. 11:1

Ever alert to indications of God’s will for his life, Paul was desirous of responding promptly. Recalling one such notable occasion, we quote: “A vision appeared to Paul in the night; 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

After arriving in Philippi—one of the chief cities of Macedonia—with Silas and other brethren, Paul was introduced to Lydia, a seller of purple dye and evidently a proselyte to the Jewish faith. She, along with other devout women, had gathered for prayer at a riverside on the Sabbath day. (vss. 12,13) As noted in our Key Verses, Lydia’s heart was opened to Paul’s message concerning Christ. She and her family received water baptism and invited the apostle and his companions to lodge at her home.

Subsequently, Paul witnessed to others in Philippi despite facing fierce opposition from those who opposed his ministry, resulting in his being imprisoned and beaten along with Silas. Nevertheless, at midnight, they rejoiced with prayers and praises to the Heavenly Father, after which a great earthquake occurred, and they along with the other prisoners were set free from their bonds. The prison keeper, upon waking, assumed everyone had fled and was prepared to kill himself. However, Paul called out to assure him that he should not harm himself because none of them had escaped. Ultimately, after ministering unto Paul and Silas’ needs, the jailor and his family were baptized.—vss. 16-34

Following this, Paul and Silas returned to Lydia’s home to greet the brethren before continuing their missionary journey. Their visit to Philippi was surely a great source of encouragement to these devoted servants of God in that both Lydia and the prison guard, as well as their families, had fully accepted Christ and commenced their sojourn along the narrow way.—vs. 40

Although Lydia originally was a Gentile who converted to the Jewish faith, and eventually became a devoted Christian, her experience confirms that God is “no respecter of persons,” but he will accept as prospective members of Christ’s bride all those who reverence him.—Acts 10:34,35■