

Let The Lydias Arise! | David Antwi | Acts 16:7-15

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[0 : 00] Hallelujah! We thank God you've tuned into this message by David Entry at Caris Church. No hand can help you with the fulfillment of your destiny but the Word of God.

May God's hand align you further into your destiny through this word. Acts chapter 16, reading from verse 7 to verse 15.

After they were come to Mysia, they are said to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them not.

And they, passing by Mysia, came down to Troas.

And 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 endeavored to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel unto them.

[1 : 04] Therefore, loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samotracia, and the next day to Neapolis.

And from thence to Philippi, which is the chief city of that part of Macedonia and a colony. And we were in that city abiding certain days.

And on the Sabbath, we went out of the city by a riverside where prayer was what to be made.

And we sat down and speak unto the women which resorted thither. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple of the city of Titeria, which worshiped God, heard us, whose heart the Lord opened that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul.

And when she was baptized in her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and abide there.

[2 : 20] And she constrained us. Here ends the reading of God's word. Do not underestimate what can happen and does happen when God's word is taught, when the word of God is taught, when the word of God is spoken.

Paul and his companion Silas, in Acts chapter 16, they took their journey to go and do missions work.

After Paul and Barnabas have gone their separate way, that was the last time we actually heard about, we heard of Barnabas. The Bible didn't tell us about his mission.

Because that obviously tells you that Paul was the key person. And even the last verse, in verse 15 says that it was Paul and Silas who was commended, you know, were departed, being commended by their brethren.

How about Barnabas, he went. So, it kind of, even though God was still with Barnabas, it kind of seemed like the spotlight of God and what God was doing for the record of redemption or God's program.

[3 : 52] It's not everything that God got recorded. A lot of things are not worth recording and never got recorded because it was not necessary for redemption program.

Everything recorded in scripture is necessary for unfolding of God's agenda and God's redemption program. Now, when Barnabas separated from Paul, he was no more mentioned in the history of what God was doing.

Even though God was still with him because John Mark later on became like a Barnabas because Paul said, In my days of everybody abandoning me, bring John Mark.

Because he was an encouragement. In his dying days, he needed someone who would stand with him and encourage him. Barnabas had done a good work on John Mark. But in spite of the fact that he was a good person and knew how to do the work, separating himself from Saul took him off the scene from Paul.

Now, Paul went to Silas and Barnabas's absence paved the way for Silas. And as you saw, they got Timothy involved.

[5 : 07] And so now it seems to be Paul, Silas, and Timothy. Because Timothy had to be circumcised to come on board. And so when they continued their journey, and we saw from the text we just read that, that last week actually, they tried to go to Bithynia.

Now, verse 6 says, Now when they had gone through, through Aphrygia, the regions of Galatia. Let's all say the regions of Galatia. The regions of Galatia. And were forbidden by the Holy Ghost to preach the word of God in Asia.

Alright, the Holy Spirit forbid them preaching in Asia. Now, Galatia was part of Asia. So, they were in Galatian territories, and God said, don't preach.

Then, verse 7 says that, And after, after they, everybody say they. They. After, don't forget that word. After they.

That tells you the one who was writing was not part of them. He was telling you, after they will come to Mesia, they. I say it means they tried to go to Bithynia, but the Spirit suffered them.

[6 : 17] No, the Spirit would not allow them. And they passing by Mesia came to Troas. Troas was a seaport.

And they passed by the north, north, north, western end of Asia. So, when you go past Troas, now you are going into the Aegean Sea, which was a strait.

It's called the Dardanelles strait. The strait is like a, a canal is a man-made channel. While a strait is not, it's like a canal, but natural.

Okay. Separating two major lands. So, that was the strait. When you cross that strait, you are coming into Europe. So, there was a thin strait or a river or a water body separating Europe from Asia.

Not major sea. And Troas was at the Asia side, the seaport on the Asia side. Beyond that, you are entering into the waters that will lead you into Europe.

[7 : 28] Okay. So, they wanted to preach the gospel in Asia, but the Holy Spirit did not allow them. Why? Because God had an agenda for Europe.

God was now stepping into a new field Jesus even didn't go to. God, the gospel was about to get into Europe before it would come back to Asia. Because it wasn't like Asia didn't need to hear the word.

But at that material moment, God's eye, like some of you, at this material moment, the eye of heaven is on you. It doesn't matter what might look bad around you.

I'm telling you, God has time for everybody. And somebody here, I have a feeling, this week is your time. In the name of Jesus Christ.

God has a way of bypassing others to reach out to somebody whose time has come. So, when God also, when you seem to have been bypassed, it doesn't mean God won't come back to you.

[8 : 31] But it has to do with, because when Jesus was in heaven, he wrote the letter. All the seven letters were to Asia. The churches in Asia, not the churches in Europe. So, the ancient territory was necessary, but at that material moment, God's eye was going, God was heading towards Europe.

Like the way, in our modern times, we have a lot of Asians, more than Africans, heading towards Europe and to UK. It's the same way God, too, at that time, was heading towards Europe and for UK.

Praise the Lord. So, now, going back to the text, it says that after we came to Mysia, sorry, after they came to Mysia, they are said to go to Bithynia by the spirit, through the service of the university.

Verse 8 says that, and they passing by Mysia came to Traos. Now, that's the seaport. And a vision, that's in Traos, or Troas, 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. Now, what is Macedonia? Macedonia was like the Galatian territories.

[9 : 49] So, the Galatian territories was the coastal territories of Asia, Northwest Asia, beyond which you go, you are crossing to Europe.

So, when you cross into Europe, that territory is Macedonia. Do you understand that? So, from Asia, you cross into Europe. So, Macedonia was Europe. Okay.

Macedonia, that territory was Europe. And so, they saw, Paul saw a vision. You remember, that was not the first time someone was seeing a vision. In Acts chapter 9, verse 12, Ananias saw a

vision.

And in Acts chapter 10, verse 3, Cornelius saw a vision. And in Acts chapter 10, verse 17, Peter was thinking about the vision. So, that was not the first time vision was mentioned.

A vision is when you are kind of not asleep. Dream is, you have to sleep to dream. Okay. So, if you have a big dream, you have been sleeping a lot. You need to sleep to dream.

[10:51] But in a vision, you don't have to sleep. So, you can see a vision when you are not asleep. That's why Peter fell into a trance. And he was thinking about the vision. Okay. So, he was really, it's like partially asleep and kind of not asleep.

But he had his consciousness. So, Paul saw a vision by night. It's in the verse 9, it says that at night, or a vision appeared to Paul in the night.

And he tells us the vision. But, permit me to go back a little bit and tell you, it's always good to be silent on what the Bible is silent on. But sometimes, you can read in between the texts and make safe conclusions.

So, that's what sometimes theologians do. Now, the Bible says that they wanted to go and preach in the territory of Galatia, verse 6. But the Spirit, through Phrygia, they went to Galatia.

They were forbidden by this. How did the Holy Spirit do it? Did they hear a voice say, no! The Bible didn't tell us. Some scholars believe that, you know, in Galatians, Paul said, you know how I preached the gospel to you.

[12:05] I preached the gospel to you through infirmity. When I came to you, I wasn't well. So, some of you will never think Paul will be sick, but Paul could be sick. You know that because of physical infirmity, I preached the gospel to you at the first.

So, the first time I came to you and preached, I wasn't well. So, it could mean, some theologians believe that sickness did not allow Paul to do the work in Galatia.

So, they concluded that, why is it everything I'm trying to preach? I don't feel well. Now, we are not told how long they stayed in Galatia for, or that territory for. But all we know is, they were trying to preach that, but the Holy Spirit forbade them.

It could also mean that, you know, I gather many theologians who don't believe in the manifestation of the Holy Spirit, secessionists, will have to say it's maybe probably sickness.

But for some of us, it could be, you heard from God. It could be that God told you. Now, the Bible didn't tell us how, but obviously, I believe that Paul will hear from God as well.

[13:14] It might not be in a graphic vision, but however God spoke to them, God speaks to his workers. That's the core point we have to take. God speaks to his workers when it comes to his interest.

When it comes to what God is doing, he won't leave you to just do what you want. And if you want to cooperate with God, then he will guide you and speak to you. So then, because they couldn't preach there, and the Lord would not allow them, then they went from Troas, verse 9 again, and a vision appeared to Paul at night.

A man of Macedonia, there stood a man of Macedonia and prayed him, saying, come over to Macedonia and help us. So when Paul saw this vision, the Bible says that, verse 10, look at verse 10, that's interesting.

After he had seen the vision, immediately, what? Immediately, immediately, immediately, what was the first word after immediately?

Verse 7, they. Now, it looks like the author has added himself to them. This is the first time he has added himself.

[14:33] We all know it was Luke. But watch this. You know, Luke's profession, he was a physician. So probably, he was attending to Paul because of his infirmities.

And now, he had to start traveling with Paul to help Paul, because Paul had a physical doctor traveling with him as his companion because of his health challenges.

He said, for this, I went to God three times to take it away. And he says that my grace is sufficient. God didn't take that thing that was given to him to buffet him in his flesh.

The Bible didn't tell us what it is. Some Christians believe that he had some health challenges.

Okay, so physician now joins the team. So now, it's not only Paul and Silas, but it's Paul and Silas and Timothy and Luke.

So he says that after, and then some theologians also believe that the vision he saw, the man in the vision was Luke. That's why now Luke said, let's go.

[15 : 36] But you know, that's what theology can do. You can embark on a wild goose chase. You know, so, but I believe that it was a personality.

I believe the whole territory of Europe was a personality. Jesus saw Jerusalem and he wept over the city and said, oh Jerusalem. He spoke to Jerusalem about Jerusalem like Jerusalem was a personality.

Sometimes territories in the spirits are like personalities. And so that personality in a territory, the whole territory was like a personality. Because the territory was under a siege.

And he came and said, come and help us. The territory needed help. And so the personality or the man of Macedonia said, come and help us.

We need your help. So when Paul saw this vision, they concluded that that tells you they did some thinking, evaluating what has been going on.

[16 : 37] And so they safely concluded that if we have not been able to preach because the Holy Spirit has been forbidding us. And he hasn't told us where to go, but we had seen a vision and he hasn't said no, then that's where he wants us to go.

So they're concluding that the Lord had called them to, to preach the gospel to them. Now, it wasn't the man who had called them. They concluded that the man calling them was a sign that God has authorized them.

God has called them. God has sent them. God has sent them. Don't let man be your reason for doing what you do for God. Let God be your reason for doing what you do for God.

Don't forget that. I'm saying it again. Don't let your heart towards man or the needs of man or the agenda of man, the purposes of man, be the motivation behind what you attempt to do for God.

God's agenda. God's agenda. God's agenda. It's very important because once upon a time, Peter was motivated by man's agenda.

[17 : 52] And Jesus said, Satan, get behind me. Matthew chapter 16, verse 23. For you do not seek the mind of things, said Satan, get it. For you are an offense to me.

For you are not mindful of the things of God, but mindful of the things of man. Sometimes what men are concerned about might not be what God is concerned about. If you are mindful of the things of man, human rights, human rights is right, but it's not always in line with God's purpose.

Did you understand what I'm saying? So sometimes in a bit to insist on what we think is right, we might miss what God is trying to do. Sometimes you might not like somebody, but who cares who you like or who you don't like.

You are not important, you are not that important when it comes to God's agenda. Can you excuse yourself of you and allow God to be the one in charge? Sometimes your ex might show up, but excuse me, you don't matter.

Let God do what he's going to do. Sometimes somebody who has hurt you might show up and God will choose that person above you. Excuse me, once you know this is the agenda of God, humble yourself and work with God, and you will be the major beneficiary of the program of God.

[19 : 10] Anytime God helps you to see he's working, that means he wants to bless you. Every time you realize that God is doing something, that means that he's trying to, because not everybody realizes.

So if God allows you to realize it, it's God's way of incorporating you into something that will bless your life. So they moved to, so the Bible says that, after he saw the vision, they concluded that God has sent them to go to Macedonia.

And then let's see what happened. The Bible says that, therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samotris.

Samotris was an island in the Aegean Sea. The Aegean Sea was that straight that divided Europe from Asia. So it was a small island. So they went through, passed a straight course to Samotris.

And the next day, Neapolis. Neapolis was a coastal or a seaport in Europe. So in Philippi. So now they have gotten to Europe.

[20 : 18] They left Asia to Europe. The first time the gospel reached the shores of Europe was they got into Neapolis.

And then the verse 12 says that, and from there they said they went to Philippi. Now Philippi, what is Philippi? Philippi was a very important city, which is their foremost city.

Kijem says the chief city. New Kijem says the foremost city. So the foremost city of that part of, so it was a city of that part of Macedonia.

That was not the only city in Macedonia, but it was a chief city. One of the other cities in Macedonia was Thessalonica. So then, so foremost city of Macedonia.

And the Bible says, a colony. What's the meaning of that? What's the meaning of that? A colony? That should tell you about Philippi. Philippi was a colony.

[21 : 15] In the first place, originally it wasn't called Philippi. But Alexander the Great, his father was Philip II of Macedon. Alexander the Great, his dad.

Before he was assassinated, he conquered the territory. And then when he had conquered that territory, he named the territory. That's something they used to do that. They would name the territories after themselves.

So he named, and he did a few other ones like that. He named the territory after himself before Alexander the Great took over. And then the Roman Empire came in and took over everything. And that place became a major battleground between Brutus, the one who assassinated Caesar, Brutus and his accomplice.

And the one who became Caesar Augustus is called Octavia. They fought Brutus in that land. They battled, a major battle, and they defeated him. And so when Augustus became Caesar, he had a special interest in that place.

[22 : 18] So do you know what he did? He made that place a colony. What does that mean? When you are there, it's the same as Rome. All the privileges, citizenship privileges, the laws of Rome, and the privileges of Rome applied there.

So if you are born in Philippi, it means that you are an automatic Roman citizen. And you are not, the laws that ruled there was not different laws from the laws that governed Rome.

Almost like UK and Gibraltar. You know, if you are there, you are a citizen. So Philippi was a very important, and it was close, the city was close to major gold mine and silver mine.

And it was a major hub into, from Europe into Asia. So politically, it was advantageous.

Commercially, it was advantageous. And spiritually, it was also crucial.

And so that city, if you can capture that city for Jesus, it tells you that virtually you are caught.

Because that is the major Roman colony. And everything governing there is Roman, very Roman.

[23 : 26] And so, that you should understand that. It helps you to understand the whole story. So they went to Philippi. And then when they went to Philippi, they stayed there a few days. And then Bible said, on the Sabbath day.

In Acts chapter 13, verse 14, Bible says, on this, Acts 13, verse 14 says that, on the Sabbath day, and when they departed Antioch and the synagogue, they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day.

That's why Paul will always go to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as a good Jew will do. But in Philippi, the Jews were not many. So they didn't have a synagogue. How, on what condition do you end up having a synagogue?

If there are 10 Jewish male, less than 10, you can have a synagogue. But if there are 10 or more Jewish male, then you can form, you can start a synagogue. So that tells you, the Jewish population in that place was very limited, was very small.

So they didn't have a synagogue. And so now, on the Sabbath day, Paul, being a very godly person, who practices Judaism, had to go somewhere. And so, any time Jews gather somewhere and there's no synagogue or place of worship, usually, they will gather around the river.

[24 : 36] So, Jews will go to a river, by the rivers of Babylon, where we sat down. Here we went, Psalm 37 verse 1, Psalm 37 verse 1, when we remembered Zion.

In Ezra chapter 8 verse 15 and Ezra chapter 8 verse 21, it talks about how they gathered by the river, Avava also, and they prayed and they declared fasting.

Because Jews had the custom of gathering around the river when there's no particular meeting place. And so that explains, on the Sabbath, there's no synagogue. So, Paul and his team decided to go to the riverside.

And when they went there, they found some ladies praying. Ladies! Where there are no ladies, there can't be a revival. And on the Sabbath day, we went, see the we, we, we, we, we, we, no day anymore, we.

Luke was part of it. And the Sabbath day, we went out of the city to the riverside where prayer was customarily made. And we sat down and spoke to the women we met there.

[25 : 44] They met some ladies there. And they spoke to them. This whole work is about speaking. It's first of and foremost about speaking.

So when they said, come to Macedonia and help us, do you know what? They concluded that God has sent them to preach the gospel. That's how you can help people.

That's the help the land needs. The help you can use is preaching the pure gospel. The help God can send to our generation is preaching the pure gospel.

That is where everything stems out from. The gospel is the seed of what God can do in a nation, in a community, in a family, in a people. So if one person in the family becomes born again, it's a seed of God has entered the family.

Something is about to change. I know you feel alone in your family. I know you feel like you are the only one who knows God. Yes, God is aware. He called you and has a seed. If the gospel enters your heart, the gospel is making its way into the family.

[26 : 49] I believe somebody's family is about to experience God. Shout hallelujah. So, it's that they spoke to the ladies or the women there.

And there was a woman, verse 14. Now, a certain woman named Lydia. Lydia. Lydia. That's my mom's name. Lydia. Heard us.

You see where the briarco started from? What did she do? She heard. How shall they call on him of whom they have not believed?

How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? Now, I say, how shall they hear a preacher? So, the job of the preacher is the speaking and the miracle starts from the hearing on the other side.

That's why the Bible says, I think yesterday I saw it. Or is it today? He that has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says. What the Spirit is saying. Jesus said it.

[27 : 56] So, he that has an ear, he who has an ear, let him hear. Hearing your testimony starts from the other side. Your testimony starts from your hearing.

Your testimony starts from your hearing. Be careful what you are hearing. Your downfall will also start from your hearing. Your downfall.

People backslide because of what they are giving their ears to. Backsliding doesn't start from a decision. It starts from what you are hearing.

Spiritual decline. Spiritual decline starts from what you begin to hear. That means who you begin to listen to. That's when you can guarantee.

It hasn't kicked in, but it has started. It has started within a matter of time to manifest. It's like when a woman takes seed. She doesn't even know she has taken seed.

[28 : 55] It's only a few weeks later. She realizes that something has changed in her body. And to confirm it, she will do a test and then it comes up positive. But that's why that because she doesn't know the way I'm feeling.

Has something changed in my body? That's how when you begin to hear. Hearing words are seeds. They are impregnating you with either something of God or something of the enemy.

And with time, you will deliver. You will deliver. In a matter of nine. Nine days. Nine weeks.

Nine months. Nine years. Praise the Lord. So, he said, Bible says that Lydia had us.

So, it wasn't only Paul who was speaking. They were always talking. They were talking. That's how you can help a people. Talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk, talk.

[30 : 01] But talk gospel. Talk God. That's why this time is the best time in our services. So, that's why I have to take the time and the trouble to download what can release God as I speak.

Else, I will waste your time, your spiritual ears and your advantage. So, he says that we spoke. She heard us speak. That's not the only thing.

She was a seller of purple from the city of Ticheria. Ticheria was mentioned in Revelation 2, verse 18. One of the cities, the churches in Ticheria.

It was a bad church. It had become a bad church. But you can tell Ticheria was visited by God. But Lydia came from Ticheria and she used to sell purple. Those days, to get the color purple, it was very rare.

That dye, to color anything purple, you need to, it was derived, gotten from a very difficult process of some seashells. And so, anyone who wears purple must be very rich.

[31 : 09] Very, very rich. That means, it's not brand. It's beyond brand name. Lydia was a saleswoman of purple. So, she was comfortable. She had some bucks.

Lydia was comfortable. And guess what? But she wasn't proud. She was at the riverside, praying. Bible said she was a worshipper.

Bible says that, let's go right. Now, the woman named Lydia had asked, she was a seller of purple from the city of Ticheria, who worshipped God.

She wasn't Jewish, but she was a God worshipper like. And in Acts chapter 13 verse 43, Bible talk about after everything was finished, the devout people, the devout Bible says, And when the congregation had broken up, many of the Jews and the devout proselytes followed Paul and Barnabas, who spoke to them.

So, there are certain people who really have a heart. They don't have to be Jewish. So, Lydia was kind of one of such people. She really had a heart for God. No wonder God was blessing her. She had a heart for God.

[32 : 16] And so, Bible said she had them. She was a worshipper. She was a seller of purple. And the Lord opened her heart to heed the things.

See, God, God, the first convert in Europe was a woman called Lydia. The first convert, the first Christian, European Christian, on the shores of Europe was a very posh lady called Lydia.

Lydia! Lydia! Lydia was a seller of purple. The seller of purple from Titeria. The worshipper of God. God opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul.

And guess what? Verse 4. The next verse says that. And when she and her household. Everybody say household. Household. God is a household.

See, I told you. When the gospel comes, it says, sit into the house. It says, sit into the family. Listen, let me say this. Some of you. You might be the only one born again in your family.

[33 : 23] Or with another brother, another sister. And the rest don't believe. Don't worry. One day it will show up in your uncle, your aunties, or your sister's son. Your sister. By the time you realize that, the thing enters the family and is there and shows up in different places.

Yes. Gospel entering family hardly leaves the family. When the gospel enters the family, it hardly leaves the family. Because God is a household God.

And the Bible says that Lydia and her house. You remember in Acts chapter 11, I think verse 14, about Cornelius. He said, you and your house.

He said, worship the Lord. Your household. All you, all your household will be saved. God thinks household. Men and brethren, what shall we do? He said, believe in the Lord.

Acts chapter 16, 31. Believe. And you shall be saved. And your household. Don't forget this. Some of us are very worried about your brother. Very worried about your sister. No, be worried about your fervency in the Lord.

[34 : 30] If you stay fervent in the Lord, God will buy some supernatural means. He has a way of opening people's hearts. God, God opened Lydia's hearts.

Touched Lydia's hearts to heed the things spoken by Paul. And the Bible says that, and when she and her household were baptized, say baptized.

That means, ah, let me say this. That, what does that mean? It doesn't mean Lydia believed and all the children, everybody got baptized. It means that Lydia believed, and when she believed, the household also believed.

Because baptism is for believers. So if you say the household were baptized, it means that they also believed. But because of Lydia, the gospel came into the household. And everybody living in her house also heard it, and they said they believed.

So Lydia and her household, the verse again says, Lydia and her household were baptized. When they were baptized, she begged us. I thought he was going to say, beg them.

[35 : 32] Look, it's part of this whole thing. It was embedded. She begged us, saying, if you have judged me, that's Lydia talking, to be faithful to, not to you, to the Lord, come to my house and stay.

So she persuaded us. That's it. She was actually in sales. You can tell. She was a good saleswoman. She was able to persuade them. She was able to persuade them to, and you look at the caveat, said, if you have judged me, faithful to the Lord.

That means, if you don't come, you don't think I'm faithful to God. If you believe that I'm faithful, then you have to come and stay in my house. She persuaded them. Can you imagine? She, watch this, watch some of you haven't heard.

She persuaded them to do them a favor. Because she knew doing them a favor was doing herself a future. Wow.

