



LYDIA

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Who is Lydia?

Lydia is a God fearing woman who lived in Thyatira (Turkish city – old Asia). She was a business woman in fabric industry. There is no indication of her family. The bible talks about her love for God and she was wealthy to support others.

Paul was on his 2nd missionary journey in Europe. He arrived at Philippi. In those times, Romans had a decree that nothing other than their law or religion or their teachings should be entertained. So, it was a customary practice for all the Jews in Philippi to gather in a place of confidence outside the city to do their worship or prayer. On a Sabbath day, Paul went to the riverside where prayer was done customarily. As it was a riverside, there had been some women assembled. Paul preached gospel to them. Amongst the women was Lydia. She heard the gospel and got baptised with her household. Household here can be her servants or slaves too. Lydia's Christian journey started from here. She kindly invited Paul and his fellow believers to her home and stay during their missionary trip.

Bible Account:

Acts 16:11-15 NKJV - ¹¹Therefore, sailing from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and the next *day* came to Neapolis, ¹²and from there to Philippi, which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, a colony. And we were staying in that city for some days. ¹³And on 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 who met there. ¹⁴Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, **who worshiped God**. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. ¹⁵And when **she and her household were baptized**, she begged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." So she persuaded us.

Lessons from Lydia:

- ❖ Lydia was a Gentile. Still she was a devout worshipper of true God (V14).
- ❖ Lydia was among the few women who came forward to listen to what Paul said. The action of taking the step forward was blessed.
- ❖ She was a wealthy woman and she doesn't need to come to the riverside for the customary prayers. She could have brought Paul or others to her home to do the worship. But, she had a heart of humbleness and she went to the riverside seeking God.
- ❖ Lydia could have had her heart on her money making business (treasure) rather than praying to God. But, she knew who is the greatest and prioritised her heart to need. It was inclined to God and His worship. She had the desire for God than the riches. So she was blessed for that.
- ❖ There were women in the preaching or prayer area. But only Lydia is mentioned in this account. It shows that she alone responded in faith.
- ❖ It says that the Lord opened her heart to heed to what all Paul was saying (V14). Her desire for God and the blessing from God can be seen in this point. God did not choose Lydia alone in Philippi to be God's child. Though there were many women in that area, only Lydia gladly received Paul's message about Jesus. So God blessed her by touching her heart. Hence, no one can say that God is partial. (Note: "Opened her heart" means to make one's heart to understand more better; to see with clear understanding what one is teaching; pay keen attention to what one is saying.)
- ❖ She got baptised as soon as her heart was opened and not her alone, her household. Through her, the household are blessed too. She laid an example to her household in this. She and her household the first people to get baptised in Europe.
- ❖ She had the heart of kindness, humbleness, hospitality and persuading in love. She was bold and courageous too. They could be seen when she invited Paul and his people to her home.
- ❖ She used her riches to serve God's people. She offered an accommodation for God's people on their missionary journey in life doing God's work.
- ❖ **Acts 16:40** - ⁴⁰ So they went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they encouraged them and departed. This clearly shows how much Paul and his fellow brothers appreciated Lydia's hospitality and faithfulness. After their release from prison, they went into her home. That is truly a blessing for Lydia.
- ❖ Thyatira – In the book of Revelation, John addresses 7 churches. One among them is the church of Thyatira. Lydia might have been one among the foundation stone laid in the church.

INSIGHT for US:



- **Treasure:** Her treasure was God – where the treasure is there the heart will be. (**Matthew 6:21**)
- **Fruit of the Spirit:** Love, Joy, Peace, Longsuffering, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self control were exhibited by Lydia. (**Galatians 5:22,23**)
- **Faith in Action:** She did her desires in actions to get the blessings of God. Faith without works or actions is dead. (**James 2:20**)
- **Serving God's people:** Lydia used her worldly riches she gained for God's people. She provided food and accommodation. (Not as a ritual but truly from heart)
- **Yield:** Lydia yielded completely or fully to the Spirit of the God.

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Gal220Ministries.org & XpressChrist@gmail.com