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Paul’s Vision of the Man of Macedonia

16: 6-10

50 AD

Paul’s vision of the man of Macedonia DIG: Who spread the gospel to the province of Bithynia? Why was Macedonia so important? Note the change from “they” to us in verse 10. How does this relate to Luke 1:3-4? How and why is this closed door pivotal?

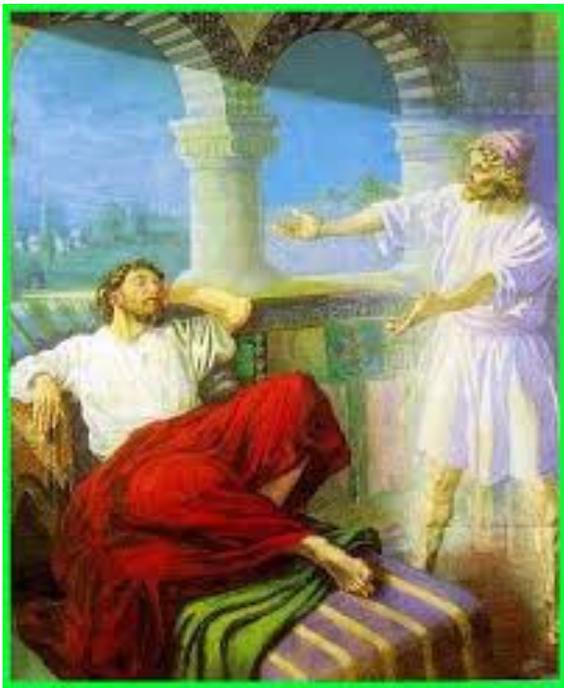
REFLECT: How sensitive are you to the direction of the Ruach Ha’Kodesh? When was the last time He told you “no!” How did you respond? Did you plow ahead anyway? How did that work out for you? Or did you obey? In hindsight, what did you avoid? With so many possible reasons for feeling led a certain way, how do you sort out the voice of the Holy Spirit from all others? How would you advise someone to navigate this? God still calls people to the mission field. Perhaps many today will encounter a “Macedonian man” who will call them out to the mission field. Might you be one of those people?

These verses provide a brief summary of **Paul’s** travel’s that eventually lead **him** to **Troas**, an important part on the coast of **Asia**. What this passage suggests is that while **Paul** seems to have planned to head directly across **Galatia** and into the province of **Asia**, and perhaps on to **Ephesus**, not once but twice **ADONAI** had to correct **his** course.³⁶⁶

Having **passed through the Phrygian region of** the province **of Galatia**, **Paul** decided to move further west to the Roman province of **Asia**, in the western part of Asia Minor (now part of Turkey), but **he** was **forbidden by the Ruach Ha’Kodesh to speak the word there**. This explains why **they** had to go to **Phrygia and Galatia . . .** because **they** had been **forbidden to speak the Gospel in Asia** Minor. But that area was an important one, and in the future there would be churches in such cities as Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea (see the commentary on **Revelation**, **to see link click**

Ay - Write, Therefore, What Is Now). We don’t know how **they** were **forbidden**, but **Paul** was eventually allowed to go there on **his Third Missionary Journey (16:6)**. **Paul** was being guided by hindrance. **The Ruach Ha’Kodesh** often guides as much by the closing of doors as **He** does by the opening of doors. **God** knows what **He** is doing when **He** says, **“No.”**

When they came to Mysia (northwest of **Phrygia**), **they were trying to proceed into** the province of **Bithynia** on the coast of the Black Sea (north of **Galatia**). **First and Second Peter** were written from this area (**First Peter 1:1**) so it seems that **Peter** was the one chosen by **ADONAI** to evangelize this region. **But the Ruach of Yeshua** (this is the only reference to **the Spirit of Jesus** in the New Covenant) **would not allow them**. This was the only time that **the Ruach** is referred to by that title. **He** is referred to as **the Ruach of Messiah** in **Romans 8:9**, and **the Ruach of Messiah Yeshua** in **Philippians 1:19**. **So they passed by Mysia and went down to Troas** (or to give it its full name, **Alexandria Troas**), on the coast of the Aegean Sea. **It** was the seaport of **Mysia** and a free Greek city in **Paul’s** day (**16:7-8**). More importantly, however, **it** was the main port-of-call between **Asia Minor** and **Macedonia**. From **Troas**, **Paul** might have traveled in several different directions, but the matter was settled by **God Himself**.



That **night**, **God** made **Paul’s** direction clear. **Now a vision appeared to Paul in**

a dream. **Luke** implies that, having arrived in **Troas** during the day, **Paul** received **a vision** at night. **A man from Macedonia was standing and pleading with him**, saying: **Come over to Macedonia and help us (16:9)**. A call to help is often a cry to save in the Bible (**Genesis 49:25; Exodus 18:4; Deuteronomy 33:26; Psalm 10:14; Isaiah 41:10**). The greatest **help** we can bring to anyone is the life-changing gospel of **Jesus Christ**. This would be the first entry of the gospel into the continent of Europe, completely uncharted territory. Strategically, Macedonia also served as the link between Rome and the whole eastern part of the Roman Empire. Having received the divine **vision**, however, **Paul** did not hesitate.

As soon as he had seen the vision (see **Bf - Peter’s Vision: A closer look at visions or dreams**), **immediately we tried to go to Macedonia** (across the Aegean Sea to the mainland of Greece), **concluding together that God had called us to proclaim the Good News to them (16:10)**. At this point – in mid-sentence – **Luke** slips into the first of the **we** passage in **Acts**. The shift from **they** in verse 8 to **we** here probably means that **Luke** joined the other missionaries in **Troas**. **Luke**, a Hellenistic Jew, traveled with **Paul**, and reports **his** own experiences. Like **Timothy**, **Luke** was to be **Paul’s** faithful friend and loyal companion for the rest of **his** life. **Verse 10** is the first of the **us** passages in **Acts**. **They** will continue until **16:17** and resume at **20:5**. The question is often asked, “Who is included in this **we** passage?” So, let’s take a more detailed look at them.

A closer look at the “us” or “we” passages and sea passages: We must first admit that **the author** seldom intrudes **himself** directly into the text. There are only a few parenthetical remarks (**17:18** and **21**). So we must ask why here? Why now? Why this? Well, **Luke** was present for a very limited amount of time with **Paul** during the **Second Missionary Journey** and more extensively during the **Third Missionary Journey**. The author does not wish to make a great deal of his own personal participation in these events, especially since **he** seems only to have been an observer and recorder of the actions and words of others, and so he quietly and subtly includes the **us** or **we** passages, without fanfare, and thus without introduction.

Luke’s played a role other than that of “minister of the word,” that is, a coworker in the Gospel in the usual sense of fellow evangelizer or helper in church planting. Perhaps, **he** was the team’s doctor. More attention should be paid to the fact that **Paul** sometimes practiced **his** trade as **he** traveled from city to city, and perhaps some of **his** traveling companions did as well. It is quite possible that **Luke** lived in **Troas** or perhaps **Philippi** and traveled back and forth between those cities. This

would account for the brief **us** or **we** passages during **Paul’s Second Missionary Journey**, and why they occur just where they do. We would then have to assume that by the time of the **Third Missionary Journey**, **Luke** had agreed to travel with the group for a more extended period of time.³⁶⁷

Yeshua, You have taught me in **Your** Word that **no wisdom, no understanding, and no counsel** will prevail **against You (Proverbs 21:30)**. May I never be guilty of choosing my personal preferences and inclinations over **Your** clear guidance. And when I am unsure about **Your** specific directions, may I be willing to wait for **You**, knowing that **You give** me my **food at the right time**. And **when You give it to** me, I **gather it, when You open Your hand, I will be satisfied with good (Psalm 104:27-28)**.³⁶⁸