

K.E.Y. Bible Study

Description: K.E.Y. Bible Study introduces the essential biblical narratives, concepts, and themes, and teaches the student how to apply the message of the Bible to daily living. Each teaching session is self-contained, which allows participants to join in the study at any time during the five years.

Purpose: To teach the most significant events, passages, and doctrines of the Bible in a manner and using methods which encourages and empowers the student to:
Keep the faith that we have received
Be Equipped to serve the Body of Christ
Become Yoked, or connect, with others for the purpose of ministry

No Such Thing of Doing Business as Usual in God's Kingdom, Part I Acts 16:6-15 January 27, 2016

General Background

Christians plan as a way to know how to pray and where to begin, not to guarantee the future. Frequently, when our plans are thwarted, God's plan is implemented. Planning is an important discipline for Christians, but we must be sensitive and flexible so we can recognize when God desires us to revise or redirect our plans. We should never assume that our plans are God's plans. Acts 16 describes what appears to be a very good mission or strategy plan by Paul and his fellow mission associates. Yet, God led them in a different direction with wonderful results. This chapter teaches us that the advancement of God's kingdom is not the result of the genius of humanity but the guidance of a holy God.

Who

- God, as revealed in Jesus, the Christ, leads His people to take the initiative toward those who did not know Him.
- Paul, the church planter, who while strong willed, is very open to the leading of the Holy Spirit.
- Lydia is a woman of wealth who becomes a follower of Jesus. It is a mistake to assume that all of the early followers of Jesus were poor and uneducated. The followers of Jesus were from all different strata of the socioeconomic scale.
- Silas, who traveled with Paul, is probably the one who wrote letters for Paul. He is most likely identified as Silvanus in II Corinthians, I Thessalonians, and II Thessalonians. He is also mentioned in I Peter.

When

These events occurred in approximately 50 A.D.

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Where

In the book of Acts, “Asia” is not the continent, but a single province of the Roman Empire. Also the term “Mysia” is not a political entity or geographical area but a name given to a region much like the terms “Wire Grass” and “Black Belt” regions in Alabama. Mysia is located in the Northwest section of Asia Minor. Its informal boundaries are the Aegean Sea on the west and Galatia on the east. It is part of modern day Turkey.

What Happened

Acts 16:6

Paul and his team intended to preach in Bithynia, but God (the Spirit of Jesus) did not allow them to go there.

- Paul planned to revisit the churches he had ministered to on his first journey. Paul’s itinerant ministry was more like a church planter who works in one area for several months and then moves to a new area rather than like an evangelist who conducts brief religious meetings and moves on. Paul had a strong passion to minister to Asia. From a human perspective, Paul’s plan appeared to be very practical: there was an excellent road system, and Paul’s past interaction with the Asian world would have prepared him to connect with the people living there.
- **“having been kept from”**: We do not know how this was done, but the early church was very sensitive to what they understood as the Spirit’s leading. Did God reveal His will through allowing travel problems, or through a word of prophecy, or even through emotions?

Acts 16:7

Again, Paul and his team were forbidden by God (the Spirit of Jesus) from going to Bithynia.

“Spirit of Jesus”: The Holy Spirit is the actual presence of Jesus in our lives. Recognizing this greatly helps us to understand the role of the Holy Spirit.

Acts 16:8

Instead, Paul and his team went to Troas.

Many international travelers passed through this city. The early church planters saw the value of connecting with a pluralistic world.

Acts 16:9

Paul had a vision of a man begging him to come to Macedonia.

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- God used a variety of unusual ways to direct Paul's ministry: a bright light, a voice, and a vision in Acts 9; a vision in Acts 16 and Acts 18; a trance in Acts 22; and an angel in Acts 27. God led Paul several times by supernatural means.
- God used visions but never explained their nature. Because we live in a scientific culture, we would like to know more about the nature of visions. While the nature of visions is often the subject of much speculation, the mature believer will do well to seek the meaning of visions instead of spending time speculating. The point is that the Holy Spirit, through the vision, called Paul to Troas.
- Up to now, Luke used third person in the narrative, but now he switched to second person. "They" changed to "we" suggesting that Luke began traveling with Paul.
- It is possible that Paul met Luke at Troas. Some even think that Luke possibly had roots in this area.
- Macedonia was located in the north portion of Greece and was part of what we now think of as Europe. This is not suggesting that Europe had never heard the gospel, but this is the first intentional ministry we know of to Europe. This helped the gospel not to be thought of as an Asian movement, which would have limited it in the future.

Acts 16:10

Paul and his team quickly obeyed.

"we got ready at once": This phrase implies urgency. God's revelation always calls for immediate obedience.

Acts 16:11

Luke listed the places they passed through.

This was part of his desire to present accurate information. Luke wrote as a historian, writing to people who have a historical interest.

Acts 16:12

They traveled to Philippi, a Roman colony and a leading city of that district of Macedonia.

- Philippi was a well-known city; it was on the famous Ignatian Way. In ancient history, this city was called "Kreinides" and was known for its wells. Later, Philip II of Macedon captured the city. Because of its gold deposits, he renamed it after himself. It was a significant place historically and commercially.

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- Luke wrote more about the ministry in Philippi than we would expect from such a brief stay.

Acts 16:13

On the Sabbath, the group went to a place outside of the city gates to pray.

- Usually Paul and his mission team went to the local Jewish synagogue on the Sabbath. Instead, they went to a river to pray.
- It is very possible that the Jewish community in Philippi was too small to have a synagogue.

Acts 16:14

Paul met Lydia.

- Lydia was a Gentile who worshipped the God of the Jews. Lydia was from an area known for making purple dye and purple cloth.
- Apparently, she was a respected member of the community and possibly possessed great wealth.

Acts 16:15

Lydia and the members of her family were baptized.

- The disciples were not just inviting people to believe in the Jewish God but to fully encounter God through Jesus, the Christ. Lydia was baptized, indicating her faith in Jesus.

Acts 16:16

Paul and his team stayed at Lydia's home.

- It is important to note Lydia's invitation to the mission team. Hospitality was seen as a mark of authentic Christian faith (see also Romans 12:13b and I Peter 4:9).

K.E.Y Application

It is more important to follow God's direction than it is to complete our plans.