

A photograph of a river flowing through a wooded area. The water is clear and reflects the sky. The banks are lined with trees, some with bare branches and some with green foliage. The text is overlaid on a green semi-transparent box in the center of the image.

Lydia of Thyatira:
The Lord Opened Her Heart
Acts 16:12-15

Acts 16:12-15

- “And 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. 13 And 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. 14 Now 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. 15 And 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.”

Lydia of Thyatira

- The name, “Lydia” is an ethnicon, a name that means “the Lydian woman” (Lydian with a feminine ending) indicating that she was originally from Thyatira in the province of Lydia in Asia Minor.
- She was a “Purpuraria,” or a guild member who sold purple dye highly prized among the nobility and wealthy
- Tyrian purple (Greek, πορφύρα, porphyra, Latin: purpura), also known as Tyrian red, royal purple, imperial purple, or imperial dye

Lydia of Thyatira

- It was one of the two dyes used by the Jews in coloring the fabrics used in the construction of the tabernacle; the other was a blue dye also made from sea snail shells called tekhelet
- Tyrian purple was expensive; fourth century BC historian Theopompus reported, “Purple dyes fetched its weight in silver at Colophon and Philippi” in Asia Minor.

Lydia of Thyatira

- Lydia was most likely either a Greek proselyte to Judaism or a Hellenistic Jewess even though she lived in a Roman settlement.
- Paul and his companions stayed with her until their departure to Thessalonica
 - Acts 16:40 - 17:1 - “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. 17:1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.”

Lydia of Thyatira

- The fact that there is no mention of a man leads us to believe that she may have been a widow.
- Considering the business she practiced and her ability to keep a large number of guests indefinitely, she must have been wealthy and rather influential.
- There is a chapel in Philippi which many consider to be built in Lydia's honor. A baptistery is located on the traditional site where Lydia was baptized in the Gangitis River by Paul near Philippi

What Kind Of Woman Was Lydia?

- She was a woman of faith.
- Because her heart was open to the will of God, He opened it further with the Gospel of Christ
 - Matt. 5:6 - “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.”

What Kind Of Woman Was Lydia?

- Matt. 7:7-8 - “Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened.”
- Psalm 119:18, 130 - “Open my eyes, that I may see Wondrous things from Your law... 130 The entrance of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.”
- Luke 24:44-45 - “Then He said to them, These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me. 45 And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.”

What Kind Of Woman Was Lydia?

- Chrysostom wrote regarding Lydia: “To open is the part of God, and to pay attention that of the woman.”
- Her faith came through hearing the Word of God
 - Rom. 10:17 - “So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”

What Kind Of Woman Was Lydia?

- She became a Christian woman.
- Lydia became the first European convert, the forerunner of most of us here today.

What Kind Of Woman Was Lydia?

- She was a hospitable woman.
- Very likely, her home was where the church at Philippi met.
- When Paul and Silas came back to her home, bruised and battered after their discharge from prison, she was not ashamed of them

What Kind Of Woman Was Lydia?

- 1Tim. 5:10 - "...well reported for good works: if she has brought up children, if she has lodged strangers, if she has washed the saints' feet, if she has relieved the afflicted, if she has diligently followed every good work."
- Heb. 13:2 - "Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some have unwittingly entertained angels."
- 1Peter 4:9 - "Be hospitable to one another without grumbling."

What Kind Of Woman Was Lydia?

- If she had a poor moral reputation, Paul would not have risked his influence for Christ by staying in her home
 - Acts 16:15 - “And 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.”

What Kind Of Woman Was Lydia?

- She was a consecrated woman.
- She would have received Paul's letter to Philippi, if the church was still meeting in her home

What Kind Of Woman Was Lydia?

- Phil. 1:1-7 - “Paul and Timothy, bondservants of Jesus Christ, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, with the bishops and deacons: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, 4 always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, 5 for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, 6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ; 7 just as it is right for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart, inasmuch as both in my chains and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers with me of grace.”

What Kind Of Woman Was Lydia?

- She would have been one of those women who were fellow laborers with him in the Gospel
 - Phil. 4:3 - “And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life.”

What Kind Of Woman Was Lydia?

- Because she was an affluent and successful businesswoman, she would very likely be one of the generous contributors who helped to support Paul

What Kind Of Woman Was Lydia?

- Phil. 4:14-19 - “Nevertheless you have done well that you shared in my distress. 15 Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. 16 For even in Thessalonica you sent aid once and again for my necessities. 17 Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that abounds to your account. 18 Indeed I have all and abound. I am full, having received from Epaphroditus the things sent from you, a sweet-smelling aroma, an acceptable sacrifice, well pleasing to God. 19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

What Kind Of Woman Was Lydia?

- She was the woman with the open heart
- Paul's Macedonia call is familiar to every Christian
 - Acts 16:9-10 - “And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, Come over to Macedonia and help us. 10 Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them.”
- It is appropriate that the first person to benefit from the great Macedonian call was a Greek business woman, and the second person to receive the Gospel was a Roman soldier.

What Kind Of Woman Was Lydia?

- The Gospel is for those whose hearts are open to God and truth
- Often women at that time were looking for the true God. They were disgusted and disillusioned with the evils of polytheism and heathenism, and many turned to Judaism for an answer. They were prepared for the Gospel of Christ
 - Acts 17:12 - “Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men”
- Sooner or later, the world does not fill that emptiness inside, and one must look for truth

What Kind Of Woman Was Lydia?

- “What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself.” (Blaise Pascal, 1670, *Pensées* VII p. 425)

What Kind Of Woman Was Lydia?

- Acts 17:26-28 - “And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings, 27 so that they should seek the Lord, in the hope that they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; 28 for in Him we live and move and have our being, as also some of your own poets have said, 'For we are also His offspring’”

What Opened Lydia's Heart?

- She heard Paul preach, and the Lord opened her heart to what he said
 - Acts 16:14 - “Now 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.”

What Opened Lydia's Heart?

- Specifically how the Lord opened her heart is not stated, she simply heard what Paul said
 - Acts 16:13-14 - “And 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. 14 Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us.”

What Opened Lydia's Heart?

- Faith comes by hearing the word of God - Rom. 10:17
- The Gospel of Christ is God's power to save - Rom. 1:16
- The Gospel tells of God's goodness that leads one to repent - Rom. 2:4
- Lydia was willing to heed the things spoken by Paul - Acts 16:14-15

What Opened Lydia's Heart?

- God is not going to reach down from heaven and open your heart apart from the means He has already supplied, the Gospel. If it gets through to your heart, it is because:
 - You were looking for the truth
 - You were honest enough to recognize it when you heard it
 - You were humble enough to believe and obey it
 - You were willing and dedicated enough to walk in it
- You are the factor that determines whether your heart is opened by God