

## A Woman of Macedonia

### Acts 16:9-10 (KJV)

9 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. 10 And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

Last week I discussed the “Man of Macedonia” and the story of Alexander the Great. As you may recall, Alexander the Great was from Macedonia and went on a military campaign where he and his armies conquered most of the known world at the time. Not only did he conquer the world, but he managed to get most of the regions that he conquered to declare him to be a living god. His home town of Macedonia thought of him as a son of Zeus; the priests in Jerusalem didn’t declare him to be God, but they did tell him that he was the fulfillment of the prophecy in Daniel 8; the Egyptians did declare him to be Pharaoh and the son of the god Amun; there are some who even think that he influenced the development of Buddhism. Everywhere that Alexander the Great, the original “Man of Macedonia,” went he was told that he was divine; a living deity living among mortal men.

And so, it is within this context that Paul sees a vision of a “Man of Macedonia” asking for help. The significance of this request cannot be understated.

Macedonia was not just a random place; it was the birthplace of the modern world. The Roman Empire existed in large part because they could take over territory that Alexander the Great had already conquered. The Romans were very adept at conquering a land and then integrating the customs of that land into their own. The Romans were just ignorant barbarians until they conquered the Etruscans. The Etruscans were educated and skilled engineers. When the Romans conquered the Etruscans, they took on their culture and started making big buildings with arched doorways, aqueducts to carry water into their cities, valuing education amongst its citizens. In fact, most of the things you think of as “Roman culture” were things that the Romans adopted from the Etruscans.

Likewise, when the Romans conquered the Greeks, they adopted their culture, especially the concept of a “Democracy.” The Roman government was set up as a Republic with a representative democracy because of the influence of the Greeks.

The Roman Senate was made up of the representatives of the people and modeled at the Greek form of government. Caesar was an elected official with a division of power separate from the Senate, but also elected by the people.

At least he was elected until Julius Caesar decided to march his Army into Rome and take over the government and make himself dictator. When he decided to expand his power, he went into Egypt where he met a woman named Cleopatra.

Now Cleopatra was not even Egyptian, she was Greek; part of the Ptolemies and a descendant of one of Alexander the Great’s generals. Even though she was Greek, she had adopted the Egyptian manner of Government and was ruling Egypt as the living embodiment of the goddess Isis. So, when Julius Caesar went to Egypt and met this Greek pretending to be divine, he got the idea that maybe he could do the same in Rome. So, after Julius Caesar leaves Egypt you see the role of all later Caesars change from being an elected official to being a living deity in Rome. In fact, all the Caesars after Julius were treated as living gods. This is just another example of picking up a concept from the Greeks and making it their own.

So, when Paul sees a vision of a man asking him to come to Macedonia, he’s not being called to a random back-water location; Paul is being called to the very heart of the modern world. Everything about the modern world started in Macedonia. Even the United States owes much of its culture to the world created by Macedonia. The idea of a representative democracy: Roman idea adapted from Macedonia. Three branches of government with a separation of powers: Roman implementation of a Greek idea. A President who is leader of the military is modeled after the Roman Caesars. In instance after instance, the modern world was shaped by what happened in Macedonia. But the world created by Macedonia was fundamentally flawed; it was rotten at its core. The only way to fix the modern world was to address it at its core: Macedonia.

In other words, the only reason there is a modern United States with a Greek form of Government and a Christian moral compass is because Paul went to

Macedonia. The only way to get a modern Israel is to have a modern United States; the only way to get a modern United States is to send Paul to Macedonia. A seemingly insignificant dream puts the world onto a 2000-year course of action that leads directly to the second coming of Christ.

**Acts 16:10 (KJV)** And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us for to preach the gospel unto them.

Remember that Luke and Acts were both written by Luke. In fact, it would not be incorrect if they had named the book of Acts as “2<sup>nd</sup> Luke.” Most of Luke and Acts are written in third person when Luke relating events that he has heard from others who were there at the events. In verse 10, however, Paul begins to use the word “we.” That tells us that the events we are about to read are not second-hand stories that Luke is writing; these are things that happened to him.

“We endeavored to go into Macedonia...”

“we came with a straight course to Samothracia.”

“we went out of the city by a river side.”

The events in this portion of the story are events that Luke personally witnessed and actively participated in.

### **Battle of Philippi**

#### **Acts 16:11-12 (KJV)**

**11** Therefore loosing from Troas, we came with a straight course to Samothracia, and the next day to Neapolis; **12** 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.

Luke calls the city of Philippi “a chief city in that part of Macedonia.” This is a huge understatement on the part of Luke. Philippi was one of the most significant cities in the entire Roman Empire at the time. The city itself was named after Philip, Alexander the Great’s father, so it was the main capital of the kingdom of Macedonia both after Alexander’s death. The city itself was built near gold mines so it was very rich.

While those two things were enough to make the city important to the Romans, what really sealed its fate was what happened in 44BC. I mentioned that Julius Caesar had changed the role of Caesar from an elected official to Emperor. As you can imagine, this was not very popular with some of the citizens of Rome. Among them who were not happy were two Senators named Cassius and Brutus. A group of Senators stabbed Julius Caesar on the floor of the Senate. This started a civil war within Rome that lasted several years. The main contenders were three people: Brutus, Octavian, and Marc Anthony.

Brutus was Julius Caesar's nephew.

Octavian who was also Julius Caesar's nephew.

Marc Anthony who was Julius Caesar's lieutenant.

These three people accumulated followers that engaged in a 3-way civil war, each fighting each other for territory, but none of them ever able to achieve a decisive victory over the others. All that changed when Octavian and Marc Anthony decided to join forces against Brutus and Cassius. The decisive battle where the Roman Republic became the Roman Empire took place at the Battle of Philippi. So, Philippi was not just a "chief city" as Luke describes it, it is the place where Rome changed from a Republic to an Empire.

When Paul goes to Philippi in Macedonia, it had only been about 70 years since that battle. Many of the soldiers who fought in that battle were still living in Macedonia. It would be like Paul seeing a vision to go to the United States and then the first place he chooses to set up a church is Gettysburg Pennsylvania. The battle of Gettysburg was one of the most decisive battles of the American Civil war and determined the course of both the war and the country.

Likewise, the battle of Philippi was the most significant battle of the Roman civil war and determined the course of that country as well. The significance of Paul going to Macedonia and then to Philippi cannot be understated. To have a second coming, you need to have a modern Israel; to have an Israel, you need to have a Christian United States; in order to have a Christian United States, Paul needs to go to Philippi in Macedonia.

## A Woman of Philippi

**Acts 16:13 (KJV)** And on the sabbath we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to be made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women which resorted thither.

There are several things in this verse that tell us about life in Philippi for the Jews living there. First we must remember that at the time of this writing the Temple is still in Jerusalem. The Temple is still the heart and soul of Judaism. Because Jews were living all over the world, they needed a way to practice their religion separate from the Temple sacrifices. One of the ways they did this was by setting up schools called “synagogues.” These synagogues were originally more like modern Bible schools. That is, they were places where people could go for education in the scriptures. They were not places of worship per se because worship still had to be performed in the Temple. They were simply places of education and study.

Attendance at the synagogues was mandatory for men, but optional for women. Men were required to take their sons to the synagogue to educate them in the scriptures. Women, however, could go if they wanted to, but were not required. Even today in many Orthodox Jewish neighborhoods this concept is still practiced: the men and boys go to the synagogue while the mothers and daughters stay at home to prepare the meals.

So, it is in that context that you find scriptures such as:

### **1 Corinthians 14:34-35 (KJV)**

**34** Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience as also saith the law.

**35** And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church.

Some people look at this scripture and think it means that God loves men and hates women. This could not be further from the truth. Rather, because it was the men who were required to go to synagogue from an early age, it was the men who were typically better educated and therefore better prepared to speak in the church. Paul is preaching against people who are unprepared; getting up and

disrupting the service. Even today we allow both men and women to speak in the church, but in both cases, we require that before they step into the pulpit they demonstrate that they know the scriptures. Paul is saying that anyone who speaks in church must do two things:

Don't be disruptive and don't step into the pulpit unprepared.

Unfortunately, Paul phrases this as men vs. women, but it is about being educated vs. uneducated, or meek vs. disruptive. I think there is something else at play here as well. I find it's best illustrated by a joke:

Eve is walking in the Garden of Eden when God comes to her in the cool of the day for his daily visit. Eve says to God, "I am really having trouble keeping up with the chores in the garden. I could really use some help." God replies, "I actually have a design for a helper. It is called 'a man' and it has arms that are stronger than yours and can easily work the plow, yet those same arms are gentle enough to hold you at night and keep you safe." "Wow," Eve says, "that sounds great. What is the catch?" God says, "I need you to let him think that I made him first."

I know that in my case, if God said that church was required for women, but optional for men, I would never come to church. But tell me I'm in charge and suddenly I will get here early. God knows the psychology of us men and he knows that we will do anything so long as we think we oversee it. You ladies allow us to walk around and think we are in charge, because you know we won't help otherwise. (If that weren't true you would not have laughed at that joke.)

When Paul and Luke go to Philippi, they hear that there is a group of Jewish believers that gather by the river every Sabbath day. So, they go down to the river to meet them. This group is called a "minyan" and tradition held that it had to be made up of at least 10 men. They met by the river, because they had to wash their hands with "living water" before they could eat; a good source of living water is a river.

When they get to the river, however, note what it says:

**Acts 16:13 (KJV) ...and spake unto the women which resorted thither.**

When they get to the river, there are no men in the congregation. He doesn't say, "we spoke to the people who gathered there," he says, "we spoke to the women gathered there." That tells me that there were no men in that congregation, so the women stepped in and took over. There are many theories as to why there were no men in the congregation, but the end the result is the same: the men weren't doing their job.

The men were supposed to be the leaders of the congregation, but they weren't doing their job. Kudos to the ladies for stepping in to keep the faith alive, but this is what happens when the men don't feel like they have any obligation to the congregation; they don't even bother to show up.

Paul saw a vision of a "Man of Macedonia" asking him to come and save them. When Paul gets to Macedonia, there is no man that meets him at the boat. There is no man that meets him at Samothracia. There is no man that meets him at Neapolis. There is no man that meets him at Philippi. There is no man that meets him at the river. The person that Paul meets is not a man of Macedonia; it is a woman of Macedonia named Lydia. Lydia not only believes the salvation message that Paul preaches, but she also gets her entire family baptized in Jesus Name. Lydia was a dealer in purple. The Bible is unclear whether she dealt in purple dyes or purple fabric, but either way it meant that she owned her own business and she was probably wealthy. When she asked Paul into her home, she was indirectly providing financial support for this preacher of the gospel. She not only was a leader of her family and caused all of them (both men and women) to get baptized, but she also was a leader and provider financially of the Lord's work in Philippi. If there is no second coming without Paul going to Philippi, then there is no revival in Philippi without financial support from Lydia.

Lydia is just one of many women who supported the ministry of both Paul and Jesus.

### **Luke 8:1-3 (KJV)**

**1** And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve were with him, **2** And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils, **3** And Joanna

the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance.

So, three women are listed as not only helping Jesus in his ministry, but also providing financial support: Mary Magdalene, Joanna the wife of Herod's accountant, and Susanna. Three women who support Jesus and the 12 disciples. Jesus cannot go from town to town without some financial support. He cannot feed his disciples without a means to buy food. It is Jesus and the 12 men who are sent to do the work of the Lord, but it is the women who make it possible.

## **Men and Brethren**

On the day of Pentecost, Peter gives an impassioned plea to the people who were in the Temple for the feast. Many of those people had spent months and travelled perhaps thousands of miles to be there that day. Peter says to them:

**Acts 2:17 (KJV)** And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams:

God does not say that he is going to pour out his Spirit on all men; he says he will pour out his Spirit on all flesh. He does not say that your sons shall prophesy; he says that your sons and daughters shall prophesy. God has every intention of making sure that both men and women have an equal place in the church. But when they hear what has happened, the people at the Temple ask:

**Acts 2:37 (KJV)** Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

They did not ask, "Ladies and gentlemen, what shall we do?" they asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" The world looks to us men to be spiritual leaders, not just spiritual bench warmers. I pray that the Pastor calls for people to come to the altar to pray for sinners, that everyone, men and women, would respond. I know the altar will be filled with lady prayer warriors, because there are always lots of women prayer warriors. But the Lord wants this Pentecost to be more like the first Pentecost and less like Philippi; where revival starts with a



woman of Philippi, because there is no man of Philippi; where the women must lead because the men don't bother to show up.

So, guys, I have just one question for you: would it help if I told you that you were in charge?