



Lydia

(Acts 16:9-15)

BIBLE
BACKGROUND

About This Story

The Book of Acts tells of the spread of Jesus' teachings. In the story of Lydia, we learn about Paul's journey to Philippi in Macedonia. Philippi, a Roman colony, was full of people who had never heard of God, or of Jesus. Lydia, however, was an exception—we're told she worshiped God, even before Paul arrived.

We're also told that Lydia was a dealer in purple cloth. She was a successful businesswoman who probably had access to the wealthy and powerful, the only people who could afford to buy such expensive purple cloth.

Lydia welcomed Paul into her home, Paul told Lydia about Jesus, God opened her heart, and Lydia learned. She believed and then joined in the work of spreading the good news. Lydia and her whole household—family members, slaves, employees, and possibly even friends or acquaintances—were baptized.

When Lydia heard the good news of Jesus' love, she immediately began to use her gifts and possessions to serve God. She gave Paul and his companions a place to stay and later became a partner with Paul. There is evidence in Acts and in Paul's letters that Lydia eventually became a leader in the young church in Philippi.

Why This Story Matters

God is very active in this story. God directs the path of Paul and his companions. God opens Lydia's heart to hear the good news. And God adds a gifted woman to the ranks of the apostles traveling the world to teach about Jesus.

We are not so different from Lydia. We are learning about Jesus and the wonders of God's love. We can welcome others into our home and show hospitality. We can follow Jesus. We have gifts to share! Our job is to listen and learn. With God's help we'll be able to spread the good news, too.

Learning about God's grace, the love of Jesus, and the power of the Holy Spirit from scripture or in worship, Sunday school, or Bible study helps us spread the word, too. We can follow Jesus by learning more and more about him and by teaching others about his love for everyone in the world. Now that's spreading the good news!