

Two Preachers: Amos and Amaziah

The Old Testament prophet Amos was a shepherd turned preacher. The crowd to whom he preached was the upper class of Israel, including the King himself. He was not their choice of a preacher, however. They did not choose him -- God chose Amos for them. His oratory was not refined eloquence. His preaching was not "polite" by their standards. If they could have "fired" him, they would have, but Amos was God's preacher, not theirs. **Amos 7:10-13** provides commentary on his work in Israel. "Then Amaziah the priest of Bethel sent to Jeroboam king of Israel saying, 'Amos has conspired against you in the midst of the house of Israel. The land is not able to bear all his words. For thus Amos has said: "Jeroboam shall die by the sword, And Israel shall surely be led away captive from their own land." Then Amaziah said to Amos: "Go you seer! Flee to the land of Judah. There eat bread and there prophesy. But never again prophesy at Bethel, for it is the King's sanctuary, and it is the royal residence." This text shows Amaziah to be a different kind of preacher than Amos. Amaziah would preach what his hearers wanted, rather than what they really needed. He disliked Amos' style and message. He scoffed at the warnings Amos issued about judgments coming upon Israel because of her sins. Doubtless, it pleased King Jeroboam to hear Amaziah rebuke Amos. Amaziah told Amos to leave Israel and go to Judah, where his kind of preaching might be more appreciated. "We are too refined and sophisticated for this kind of preaching," Amaziah might be heard to say. But Amos did not keep

By Mark White

quiet. He did not allow Amaziah to ridicule him and his work. He said, "I was not prophet, nor was I the son of a prophet, but I was a herdsman and a tender of sycamore fruit. Then the Lord took me as I followed the flock, and the Lord said to me, 'Go prophesy to My people Israel.' Now therefore, hear the word of the Lord..."

Amos was not a preacher for hire! He was not a prophet because his father was, or because he had gone to a "brotherhood preacher school." Nor did he preach because he was looking for employment! He was preaching because God told him to prophesy. We are made to wonder, "Why was Amaziah preaching?"

Many churches today want preachers like Amaziah. He would never be so rude as to disturb the peace of a congregation by pointing out its errors. He would not bother people by calling them to repent! No one would leave his preaching with feelings of guilt. Everything would be so sweet and pleasant that God would become nauseous! Conversely, Amos' preaching would not always be pleasant. It might even be troublesome at times if people insist on remaining in sin. His harsh rebukes might even cause some guilt feelings and unrest. But, remember -- Amos was God's preacher! Honestly now, which kind of preacher would you prefer--Amos, or Amaziah?

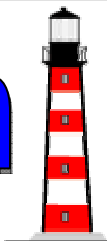


Sick			
Sam Cox (Friend of Anna Stallings)	Owen Mauldin (Seth and Summer Mauldin's Son)	Frank Hand (Laura Humphrey's dad)	Sandlyn Fultz (Davis Fultz's Sister)
Gloria Detmer and Carol Dickerson (Toni Herd's Sisters)	Don Lanier (Father of Greg Lanier)	David Hartsell (Holly and Brad's Father)	Joan Parker (Aurie Adams Grandmother)
Emma Hettinger (William Herd's Mother)	Neal May (Manna Jones' Mother)	Roger Whatley (Daphne Whatley's son)	Andrew Hagewood (Friend of Sarah Norman)
Betty Bradford	Quinton Addison (April Jerkins Grandfather)	Danny Weldon (Rusty Weldon's brother)	Sandra Qadeer (Rafia Qadeer's mother)
Gerald White (Christopher, Anna and Wesley's Father)	Meredith NeSmith (Jessica Anderson's Cousin)	Emily Stallings (Anna's sister)	Madi Wise (Friend of the Robert's)
Marty Meeks, Russell Dickerson (Toni Herd's Nephews)	Peggy Theis (Timothy Jones' grandmother)	Toni and William Herd	Kate Miller (Daughter of Brandon and Erin Miller)

- June Birthdays
- 1 - Kenlee Burton
 - 3 - Philip Stephens
 - 8 - Mac Searcy
 - 9 - Kay White
 - 11 - Hannah Alexander
 - 11 - Clint Stagner
 - 12 - Orié Cecil
 - 13 - Addison Dembowski
 - 17 - Sarah Norman
 - 17 - Brooks Pender
 - 20 - Jonas Dembowski
 - 22 - Paul Tam
 - 24 - Justin Bice
 - 25 - Corey Hunt
 - 28 - Allison Chandler
 - 29 - Josh Hudson
 - 29 - Lisa Lanier

- News and Notes
- ☒ - Let us remember our upcoming VBS (June 24-27). Cards are in the foyer to be distributed.
 - ☒ - Laura Weldon had surgery on Friday and is recovering at home.
 - ☒ - Please register your children and guests for the VBS with the forms in the foyer. Give these to Windy Dembowski.
 - ☒ - Debbi Coleman continues to recover from knee replacement surgery. Let us continue to pray for her successful recovery!
 - ☒ - Justin Robinson will be speaking for us tonight!

The Auburn Beacon



Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. (Matthew 5:16)

The Conversion of Lydia

By Steve Klein

How "the Lord Opened Her Heart"

In the city of Troas on the northeast coast of the blue Aegean Sea, Paul the apostle of Christ received the "Macedonian call". He saw a man in a vision saying "**Come over to Macedonia and help us**" (Acts 16:10). Paul and his preaching companions immediately sought passage to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called them to preach the gospel there. They sailed across the Aegean and made their way to Philippi, "**which is the foremost city of that part of Macedonia**" (Acts 16:12). On the Sabbath day, they went out of the city to the riverside to a place where prayer was customarily made. They sat down and spoke to the women who met there. Here is the account of what happened next in the inspired words of one of the evangelists who was present:

"Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us. She was a seller of purple from the city of Thyatira, who worshipped God. The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul. 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.' And she constrained us" (Acts 16:14-15).

Lydia became a Christian. She heard the gospel, the Lord opened her heart to heed the things she heard, and she was baptized. The account of her conversion must surely be consistent with other con-

Many believe that God opened Lydia's heart to hear Paul. We have shown that notion to be incorrect; God opened her heart "to heed." However, those in error on the point typically have another erroneous concept -- that God opened Lydia's heart by a direct and immediate operation of the Holy Spirit -- that He supernaturally altered Lydia's emotional processes to compel her to hear and obey.

version accounts recorded in Acts. God is no respecter of persons; He shows no partiality in the matter of salvation (cf. Acts 10:34ff.). He did nothing to bring about the salvation of Lydia that He did not do for those on Pentecost, Simon the sorcerer, the Ethiopian eunuch, or the Philippian jailor. And He did nothing for them that He would not do for you or me.

This being true, one might well ask, "Does this mean the Lord will open the hearts of those outside of Christ today like He did in Lydia's case?" Consistency would seem to demand it. If so, the fundamental issue involves determining what was done in Lydia's case. We must ask, in what way was Lydia's heart closed or what was her condition before the Lord opened her heart? What was the result of her heart being opened? And, exactly how did God do it? These are the basic questions. The

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Thoughts to Ponder

Fear not that your life shall come to an end, but rather that it shall never have a beginning.

Elders
Walker Davis
(334) 703-0050
Larry Rouse
(334) 734-2133

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES
Sunday
Bible Class9:30 AM
Worship10:20 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM
Wednesday
Bible Classes.....7:00 PM

E-Mail:
larryrouse@aubeacon.com

Larry Rouse
Evangelist and Editor

Check Us Out On the Internet: www.aubeacon.com

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Bible gives good, basic answers.

Lydia -- a worshiper before her heart was opened

Lydia "worshipped God" before she met Paul. In the original language of the New Testament, the particular word translated "worshipped" (sebomene) was used to refer to "pagans who accepted the ethical monotheism of Judaism and attended the synagogue, but who did not obligate themselves to keep the whole Jewish law" (Ardnt & Gingrich, 1979, p. 746). However, they "worshipped the only true God" and did so "in specific acts" (Kittell & Friedrich, 1971, p. 172).

Whatever God did to Lydia's heart, He did not have to force her to want to serve Him. She wanted that. She was already His worshiper, albeit in accordance with limited and outdated knowledge of His will. In Lydia's case, God did not directly overwhelm a rank sinner who had no inclination to do right in order to force a change of heart. Those who claim He does so today have no basis for it from this conversion account.

Lydia heard, then heeded

God did not have to open Lydia's heart to force her to listen to the evangelists' message either. A careful reading of the text shows this plainly. The first phrase of **Acts 16:14** is, "**Now a certain woman named Lydia heard us.**" This was before the Lord opened Lydia's heart "**to heed the things spoken by Paul.**" Lydia "heard" the gospel before the Lord opened her heart in that she listened to the words spoken by Paul and gave them her mental attention. She did not "heed" or "attend to" what she heard until after the Lord opened her heart. There is obviously a difference in this text between *hearing* and *heeding*, or as the King James Version has it, *hearing* and *attending*. Appreciating this difference is crucial to understanding what God did and how He did it.

The words "heed" and "attend" accurately convey into English the sense of the word found in the ancient language of Acts (*prosecho*). These words (both English and Greek) sometimes mean simply "to hear," "observe" or "give mental attention to", while at other times they mean "to do" or "tend to" (cf. Wigram). For instance, Timothy was urged to command some in Ephesus not to "**give heed to fables and endless genealogies which cause disputes...**" (1Timothy 1:4). People should not give these things their "mental attention." On the other hand, **Hebrews 7:13** uses the same Greek word in reference to priests giving "attendance at the altar"; here it is obvious that to "attend" means "to do" service or "tend to". In Lydia's case, "heed" must also denote "to do," because she

had already "heard."

Lydia heeded as a result of her heart being opened

Clearly, when the Lord opened her heart to "**heed the things spoken by Paul,**" Lydia was moved to respond to the gospel message -- to do what she had heard she needed to do. She heeded the things spoken by Paul "**when she and her household were baptized**" (**Acts 16:15**). Some of the better modern English versions of the Bible do a good job of showing this. The New International Version reads, "**The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message,**" and the New American Standard Bible states, "**And the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.**"

How God opened Lydia's heart

Many believe that God opened Lydia's heart to hear Paul. We have shown that notion to be incorrect; God opened her heart "to heed." However, those in error on the point typically have another erroneous concept -- that God opened Lydia's heart by a direct and immediate operation of the Holy Spirit -- that He supernaturally altered Lydia's emotional processes to compel her to hear and obey.

Of course the God of heaven has many instruments at His disposal. We can imagine that He could choose to accomplish His will by many different means. The question is, what means has He chosen? How does He open the hearts of men and women to the obedience of faith? How did He open Lydia's heart to respond to the gospel? Was it through a supernatural means not mentioned in the text or was it through the word of God spoken by Paul?

It is a plain fact that there is no mention in **Acts 16:13-15** of the direct working of the Spirit of God. To assert that God used that means to prompt obedience from Lydia is to inject something into the scriptures that just isn't there. **What is there, plainly, is the gospel message "spoken by Paul."**

God used the **preaching** of Paul and his fellow evangelists as the instrument to open hearts to the obedience of faith. On one occasion, Paul and Barnabas recounted to the church in Antioch "**all that God had done with them, and that He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles**" (**Acts 14:27**). In **2 Corinthians 5:20a** Paul wrote, "**Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us.**" The message of the gospel, proclaimed by God's people, is His tool in the hearts of men.

Today, as it was with Lydia so long ago, the gospel is "**the power of God to salvation**" (**Romans 1:16**).

Only when people hear it can their hearts be opened to faith and obedience (**cf. Romans 10:17; 6:17**).



Teach Your Children to Love Worship

By Forrest D. Moyer

A very serious problem exists among religious families: sometimes their children who have been brought up "in the church" are anxious to "get out of the house" so they won't "have to go to church" anymore. This is a perplexing problem fraught with serious consequences. Why does a child want to "get away from" the church? What kind of children from what kind of families do so? I don't know all the answers to questions like this, but let me suggest a few thoughts.

I believe that one real source of this attitude is that children are not taught to love the worship of the Lord. From the time they are infants the parents are yelling at them on Sundays to "hurry up and get up 'cause we have to go to church" with the emphasis on "have." Nothing is said about the joy of worship. Nothing is said about the wonderful privilege that is ours. Children are taught that "going to church" is a drudge. No wonder they want to get away from it.

When children are in the assembly, often they are allowed to play with all sorts of toys and games. This causes them to think that the assembly is some place to play games; and then when they are older and too big to play games, they are bored with what is going on. Many children are not taught to sing. They are allowed to play when worship to God in song is being rendered. If they are not taught to sing as tiny tots, then as they grow older they will not sing. Parents, do you teach your children the words to songs at home so they will know them and be able to join in the singing? It is a

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sad sight to see teenagers just sitting and looking around instead of singing. No wonder they have no interest. They are not taught reverence during prayer. They keep on playing instead of being taught to always bow their heads in reverence. If you took your child to the funeral of a loved one, would you give him games to play? Would

you allow him to "do his own thing" or would you teach him reverence and respect for the dead? No, our worship is not a funeral, but it is holy and children need to be taught that it is.

They must be taught to study the Word. Are you studying the class lessons with your children every day? Are you teaching them to enjoy that part of the day and really look forward to it? If this is the environment of a child, you will seldom see him wander away from the Lord. Those who are taught to study the Bible are the ones who listen to sermons and lessons. They are the ones who will understand much more of the lessons that are being presented. (And, by the way, what happened to the teenagers all sitting at the front? What an inspiration that is to the whole congregation!) These are the ones who grow up to love the Lord and stay with Him.

Friend, what are you teaching your children? To love God and His worship, His word, and His people? What you teach your child, who is a tiny tot now, will determine where he will be when he is old. Seems like Solomon said something like that somewhere.

