



## Lydia



### Details of Artwork:

Dated: September 2020

Author: Yobeth Puckett, Artist

Media: Mixed Media Acrylic

Based on: Acts 16:13-15; 16:40

Characteristics: Faithful, hospitable, leader

**Synopsis:** Lydia is only mentioned in four verses of the Bible, but we learn a lot about her in those verses. Her backdrop has various shades of green that represent power, wealth, and eternal life. She was a spiritual leader, a well to do businesswoman of a luxury business in Philippi, and the mistress of her household. Lydia was the first of Paul's converts in Europe and the first Christian church in Philippi met at her house. Lydia continued as a central figure in the local Christian church and a great supporter of missionaries.

**Story:** Paul, Silas, and Timothy first encountered Lydia worshipping and praying with a group of ladies by the riverside. There may have been only a few Jews in Philippi since there was no synagogue and they met by the river for prayer. Lydia is the only one named so she may have been the leader of the group.

Lydia was from Thyatira and was a seller of purple. As a seller of purple, Lydia would have made a good living. Lydia is recognized as a spiritual leader, a successful businesswoman, and the head of her household.

When she heard Paul's preaching, the Lord opened her heart and she believed. Others believed too, including those of her household. Her household mentioned in verse 15 includes both family and servants and indicates she was unmarried. After she, and those of her household, believed they were baptized.

She eagerly begged Paul and the missionary group to stay at her house while they evangelized in the area if they found her faithful. Paul was convinced that Lydia's faith in Christ was real since he not only baptized her but also accepted her hospitality. The fact that she had room for Paul and his entire team in her house may be another indication of her success.

The new converts continued to meet at Lydia's house. In Acts 16:40, when Paul and Silas were released from prison they went to Lydia's house and saw the brethren, were comforted, and departed.

**History:** Purple was associated with great wealth and high rank. Purple dye was difficult to produce so the dye and garments made of purple were expensive.

Women had more freedom in Macedonia than other parts of the Roman Empire, so it's no surprise that Lydia was an independent, single, and successful businesswoman there.

The reference to her and her household indicates that Lydia is unmarried and that she has servants. We don't know if she is unmarried because she's a widow, divorced, or possibly an ex-slave who never married but it's clear it was "her" household and that she owned property.

Lydia may not have been Jewish, but she knew and worshipped the God of the Old Testament. This isn't surprising as many non-Jews in the first century were attracted to the God of Judaism and Old Testament moral standards. They feared God and were recognized as adherents of Judaism who either had chosen not to or for some reason were prohibited from going the route of full conversion.

The difference in the status of women in Christianity is powerfully demonstrated by Paul's willingness to launch a church with a congregation of women.

**Memory Verse:** Ephesians 2:8-9 "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man boast."