

CALLED TO HELP



Act 16:6-10 KJV 6 Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, 7 After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not. 8 And they passing by Mysia came down to Troas. 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.

Paul and his companion made up of Timothy Silas with the historian Luke had embarked on the second missionary journey to establish all the churches previously preached to and also to deliver to them the decree of the church of Jerusalem on Gentile-Jews relationship.

The entourage went through cities in Asia Minor but were prevented by the Holy Spirit from preaching the gospel there. Even when they

attempted to enter Bithynia, the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them. They then passed by Mysia and got to Troas.

This is my question: why were they prevented from preaching the gospel at those places in Asia Minor? Was this not contrary to the command of the Lord Jesus in Mt 28 that we should go into all the world and preach the gospel to all nations? What could be the reason behind the restraints?

Mat 28:19-20 KJV 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

Act 1:8 KJV But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

As we read the account down, we found out that in Troas, a vision came to Paul by night and in that vision, a man of Macedonian was pleading with him to come and help them. There was pleading and the name of the place was mentioned. It was in Europe. It means Paul had to leave Asia Minor to Europe. Does it mean that the people in that region of Asia no longer needed the gospel?



I believe that this divine direction by the Holy Spirit directing the Apostles was deliberate. It is not that the people in Asia Minor don't need the gospel but there was an urgent need for the gospel in another region and as a matter of fact, it cannot wait. I remember the story of Philip when he was holding a gospel crusade in Samaria. There were mighty signs and wonders and the whole city believed even their witchdoctor was said to have believed too. The news got to Jerusalem and the apostles were sent to Samaria to impart the Holy Ghost to those people. However, in the midst of the crusade where thousands were saved something happened. Let us read.

Act 8:26 KJV And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert.



Philip was interrupted and asked to go to the desert. Woo! How do you ask the evangelist to go to the desert where there were no humans or the traffic was less? Philip should be in town if not for anything consolidating on the success of the preaching that has brought many to the Lord. But God had other plans and through the angel he was asked to go to the desert. So, what was happening in the desert?

Act 8:27 KJV And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship,

He met a man in charge of the finance of the queen of Ethiopia who was returning from a pilgrimage journey from Jerusalem. The man was reading a portion of the book of Isaiah. The angel directed Philip to go to him. When he got there he asked the man if he understood what he

was reading and the man said nope. He needed someone to help grasp what the scripture was talking about. Philip climbed up and preached the gospel to the man. He was saved.



You see, God saw the heart of the man that needed salvation and whose salvation will bring the gospel to Africa, so He quickly dispatched Philip from Samaria to attend to the harvest that was ripe.



You will also remember the case of Cornelius in Act chapter ten. He had been praying and giving alms to the poor but he was not saved. An angel appeared to him and told him what to do. I have always asked why didn't the angel preach to Cornelius but referred him to Joppa to get Peter? It was because the great commission has been committed to humans and not to angels.

Act 10:4-5 And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God.5 And now send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter:



The help that Cornelius needed at that time was to have someone tell how to be saved. Peter, despite his Jewish prejudice against Gentiles, was sent for that purpose.

When you read our text down, Paul eventually went down to Philippi which was the first city in Macedonia. Philippi was a colony of Romans and there was no Jewish Synagogue there. According to history Claudius a Roman empire had asked all Jews to leave Rome and at the time when apostle Paul got there there were few Jews left in the town and since there were not up to ten men in the town, a synagogue could not be erected. The first Sabbath, Paul and his companions made an inquiry and found that there is an oratory beside Gange river where some women resort for prayers. They went there and ministered to those people. I believe that Paul was sent there because of the prayers of those women. Prayer is an earthly license for God's intervention in the affairs of men.



Act 16:13 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.

I believe that it is the same thing that happened in the case of the apostle Paul. There was an urgent need in Europe and Paul had to go

there to attend to the ripe harvest in that part. It is amazing that Paul eventually went to those parts he was restrained from going to two years later. He later wrote his epistle to the Galatians. 2Cor 8:18; Act 20:6

The Greek word used for "help" in the text we read is "boetheo" It means aid, succor and relief. The question is why was the man pleading with Paul in that vision? Why was he not pleading with God to come and help them in Macedonia? God flows through people and God has made us an ambassador for Christ having given us the ministry of reconciliation 2Cor 5: 19-20.

A VISION

Vision, Dream, and Revelation. (Theophany and Angelophany.) One of the features of Bible history, both in the Old and in the New Testament, is the matter-of-fact reference which the holy writers make to special revelations of the Lord by means of appearances, visions, and dreams. In practically every case of this kind which has been recorded, these appearances were attended by extraordinary, immediate communications of God to men, usually regarding some event which was to take place in the near future. The Bible itself speaks of these extraordinary revelations, making a distinction between true and false dreams and visions. "If there be a prophet among you, I, the Lord, will make Myself known unto him in a vision, and will speak unto him in a dream," Num 12:6. "Your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions," Joe 3:21. The manner of testing whether a prophet be true or false is described in Deut 13:1-18. "They prophesy unto you a false vision and divination. and a thing of naught, and the deceit of their heart," Jer 14:14; Jer 23:16.

In some cases, God Himself appeared, either in a voice, in some visible form, or in a more or less tangible image in a vision or in a dream.

Moses was privileged above all the people of Israel on account of the manner in which the Lord communicated with him. "My servant Moses is not so, who is faithful in all Mine houses. With him will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches; and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold," Num 12:7-8. To Abram the Lord spoke in a vision, Gen 15:1, also to Jacob in the visions of the night, Gen 46:2. In the case of Samuel it was a vision in a dream, 1Sa 3:1-21. To Solomon the Lord appeared in a dream by night, 1Ki 3:5. A large part, if not all, of the prophecy of Isaiah was received by him in a vision, Isa 1:1. The Lord spoke to Ananias of Damascus in a vision, Act 9:10.

Although they are closely related to the foregoing, a special class may be made of the appearances of the "Angel of the Lord," the revelations of the second person of the Godhead, the "Angel of the covenant," in the Old Testament. The Lord appeared to Abraham in the plains of Mamre, Gen 16:1-16, and rained brimstone and fire upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah, Gen 19:24. The Angel of the Lord found Hagar in the wilderness, Gen 16:7-9. He appeared to Moses at various times, Exo 3:2; Exo 14:19; Act 7:30. Gideon saw Him when he was threshing wheat by the wine-press. Jdg 6:11-12. To Manoah and his wife the Angel of the Lord predicted the birth of Samson. Jdg 13:1-25. He gave a command to Elijah the Tishbite, 2Ki 1:3.

From these visions and revelations. which are properly termed theophanies (appearances of God) we distinguish angelophanies (appearances of angels) either in dreams or in an ordinary meeting, face to face. Thus the Angel Gabriel appeared to Zacharias in the Temple, Luk 1:22, and to Mary in her home, Luk 1:27. To Joseph an angel of the

Lord spoke repeatedly in a dream, Mat 1:20; Mat 2:13; Mat 2:19. The warning of God to the wise men was also given in a dream. Mat 2:12. That the "man from Macedonia" in the passage above, Act 16:9, was an angel seems fairly certain.

A final form of communication or extraordinary revelation was that by means of visions in the strictest sense, when the senses of the person concerned were affected in some unusual way and he was in a state of transport, or ecstasy. This was the case with Peter at Joppa, Act 11:5. It was probably also the condition of Paul at the time of his conversion, Act 9:1-43; Act 22:1-30; Act 26:1-32. He himself describes such an ecstatic vision when he was caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for man to utter, 2Co 12:2-4. Into this class belongs also the vision which John had when he received the information and saw the pictures which he has recorded in the Book of revelation.



In the vision the man of Macedonian was asking that Paul would come to help them. What help was he asking for and what help could the

apostles possibly rendered? The anguish of every soul is for God. There is a vacuum in every man which nothing else can fill except God himself. At this point in Europe, there is an urgent need for salvation. Someone or some group of people had been seeking the Lord to direct the labourers into the vineyard. Paul was the answer to that prayer. Every man that has not known the Lord needs help. They need help to move from the kingdom of darkness into the marvelous light of God's Son. Col 1: 12. They need help to be delivered from the power of Satan unto the power of God. They need their eyes to be opened. These are the reasons why God called Paul in the first instance.

Act 26:18 KJV To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me.

This is the help that every man, woman, boy and girl needs. They may be rich, poor, beautiful, height challenged or tall, fair or dark in complexion, they all need help. They may be educated or Barbarian as Paul used to call the uneducated; they may be living in the village or in township, they may be sick or healthy; there is one common denominator, they need help

You may try to help people with money for business, give them scholarships, pay their tuition fees, build homes for the homeless and rescue people from drowning, it will still not answer the need in their heart. Those things can provide temporary relief from the many challenges people face on a daily basis but the answer is not in those wonderful activities.

What is the help every man needs?

Rom 1:16 KJV For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.

It is the gospel, the good news of the Kingdom of God. It is the power of God for salvation. the Greek word for salvation there is "soteria" and it means:

- deliverance, preservation, safety, salvation
- deliverance from the molestation of enemies
- It includes rescue or safety (physically or morally): - deliver, health, salvation,

God has no other power to rescue man other than the power of the gospel of the Lord Jesus. Thus it means that if you are sick, poor, wretched, depressed, oppressed, troubled, suffering or whatever the case may be, you need the gospel. Look at how it was stated in the same account we are studying.

Act 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 to preach the gospel unto them.

The urgency of the pleading coupled with the zeal of apostle Paul made them quickly make preparations and went straight to Macedonia. If we value souls we will do the same. We will not hesitate for a moment to embark on such a journey.

The preaching of the gospel was the help the man of Macedonia was looking for and here comes Paul the evangelizer.

We have the same mandate today. The world around us is suffering, people are crying, sometimes they cannot pinpoint what the trouble is, they know they are missing something and lacking fulfillment but they do not know where and how to get it. Some people in the confused state will go and satisfy the urgent knock in their hearts through many ungodly ways like having intimate relationships with anyone just available or starting to find comfort from alcohol and things like that. These and other activities will not solve the need. It is the preaching of the gospel that can solve the problems of this world whether political, mental, social, marital, educational, and economical issues, the answer is in the gospel. It is the gospel that will transform people who will eventually transform society.



We are called to help them in these but not limited ways:

- ❖ When they are sick, they may not be aware that someone took their infirmities 2000 years ago 1Pet 2: 24; Is 53: 4-5, Mt 8: 16-17
- ❖ Many are under curses of Satan and such are oppressed. We have to tell them that there is deliverance in the name of Jesus Mt 28

- ❖ When they have financial problems, they need to know that Jesus who was rich was made poor for their sake so that through His poverty they can be made rich. This is the good news. They can walk in abundance. Phil 4:19; 1Cor 8: 9
- ❖ Many have been blindfolded in their mind towards God and this blindness of heart is worse than physical blindness. it is our duty to help lift the veil cast over their mind through ignorance.

2Cor 4:4 KJV In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of those which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.

So why are we not seeing the much needed transformation in our lives and society?

Rom 10:14-16 KJV 14 How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? 15 And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! 16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?

There is a need for preachers.

Jesus told the disciples to make their prayers towards this effect.

Luk 10:2 KJV Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

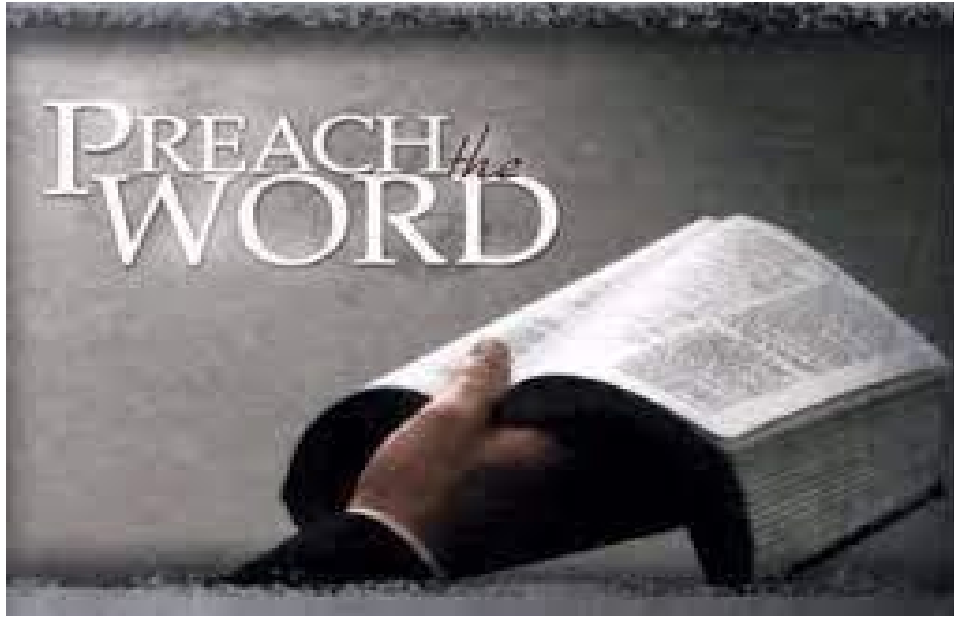


We are the harvesters of the souls that are ripe. This also should be our prayers to be sent into the field that are ripe. Jesus is the Savior of the world and since we are in the Lord and He is in us, then whatever has become of Jesus has become ours. We have become the saviour of the people around us.

Oba 1:21 KJV And saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the LORD'S.

The Hebrew word they use for "saviour" there is "yasha" and it means: to save, be saved, be delivered, to be liberated, be saved, to be saved (in battle), be victorious, to save from moral troubles, to give victory to. to free or succor, defend, deliver (-er), help, preserve, rescue, be safe, bring (having) salvation, save (-iour), get victory.

So much is laid on our hands. We are the light of the world by which the world of darkness can see. We are the hand to lead them and the legs to bring them to the Lord.



1Ti 4:16 KJV Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.

We have been given the ministry of reconciliation to reconcile men to their makers and this is the greatest help we can ever offer any person on this earth.

2Cor 5:19-20 KJV 19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. 20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God.