

## WHEN EUROPE CRIED DESPERATELY FOR THE GOSPEL

*Act 16:9 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.*

We read prior to this that the apostle Paul was forbidden from preaching the Gospel in Asia. It appears that every continent and every country has an appointed time when the hunger for God is so great that the Gospel is compelled to change plans. Perhaps the hunger of Asia was not yet strong enough for the Lord to send the apostle Paul. The cry of Europe and Macedonia was the loudest in the ears of the Lord Jesus Christ. This is a paradox when one considers the fact that Alexander the Great of Macedonia felt a great need to “civilize” the world with Greek learning and culture so much so that at the age of 30, this disciple of Aristotle, the great philosopher, had conquered everything between Greece and the north of India. Now, 300 years after Alexander, one of his countrymen cried to the apostle Paul to bring the Gospel to his country. The philosophers of Greece raised questions about the nature of existence, but the prophets of Israel pointed them in the direction of the Lord Jesus.

*Malachi 1:11 For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering: for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts.*

Why did the man of Macedonia cry to Paul? To begin with, Greece was the center of a pantheon of Greek gods, such as Zeus, Apollo, Poseidon, Athena, Artemis – in fact there were 12 gods who were reputed to dwell on Mount Olympus. Incidentally, the Olympic games were first held in Olympia in 776 B.C. in honor of Zeus. In other words, we can surmise that few other nations were as demonically oppressed as Greece because of the powerful hold these malevolent forces had on the country and its people. Where there is more than one God, there is pain and suffering. Now, fast forward to roughly the year 27 A.D. Jesus of Nazareth makes his way to Caesarea Phillippi, a region in the Galilee which was a miniature Mount Olympus – many of the same Greek gods were honored here. This is why the Lord specifically named Hades (the gates of hell), the Greek god of the underworld who demanded blood sacrifices from the many worshippers who came to Caesarea Phillipi. Here is the good news: the lord Jesus already proclaimed triumphantly that day that he was coming to Greece to destroy these demonic forces when he said the following in Caesarea Phillippi.

**Matthew 16:18** *And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

**Matthew 16:19** *And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

We must empathize through the Holy Spirit with such societies who have been traumatized by evil forces for centuries and millennia. Here are two examples: Zeus was known for his numerous affairs and romantic escapades, often pursued through deception or force. Notable examples include his transformations into various forms to seduce or abduct women, such as taking the form of a swan to be with Leda or a bull to capture Europa. Dionysus was the god of wine and ecstasy, who was often associated with wild parties, madness, and debauchery. His followers, the Bacchae, were known for their frenzied rituals. Today, in our modern times, where such beliefs apparently are laughed at, we are witnessing Europeans once again worshipping the forces of nature, engaging in occultism and even reverting back to the pre-Christian faith, such as the Norse gods (Åsatro has over 500 members in Norway). Imagine serving gods who rape and make their followers drunk! It was for this very reason the Lord saved Saul of Tarsus.

**Act 26:18** *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.*

If the man of Macedonia is silent today, the psychiatric wards and graveyards of Europe will see an increasing number of individuals losing their minds and committing suicide. We know that “The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy...” (John 10:10). The church must hear the desperate cry of the voice of the man of Macedonia. It was at night when the apostle Paul saw the vision of the man of Macedonia. Perhaps in the daytime, our friends, work and other matters, drown out the voice of the man of Macedonia. Thank God for the quietness of the night when we must be alone with the Lord. “Be still, and know that I am God: I will be exalted among the heathen, I will be exalted in the earth” (Psalm 46.10). Isn’t it interesting that the Lord commands us to be still so he might be exalted among the heathen or unbelievers? The man of Macedonia had enough of the false gods and their wickedness. Has the Apostolic Church in Europe had enough of standing by and seeing the

sufferings of an atheistic and heathenistic Europe? Let us cry together with the man of Macedonia for the salvation of Europe.

*Act 8:9 But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one:*

*Act 8:10 To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the great power of God.*

*Act 8:11 And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries.*

In one sense, Europe has been like Simon Magus of Samaria. We have been bewitched by its wealth, knowledge and splendor. But, the truth is that Europe is spiritually bankrupt. The Church must not be fooled by the exterior – hear the voice of the man of Macedonia at night. “Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked” (Revelation 3:17). Do not feel a sense of inferiority because you may not be sophisticated, educated or even an “outsider” from Africa or Asia who cannot teach Europe anything. “ But the LORD said unto me, Say not, I am a child: for thou shalt go to all that I shall send thee, and whatsoever I command thee thou shalt speak” (Jeremiah 1.7).