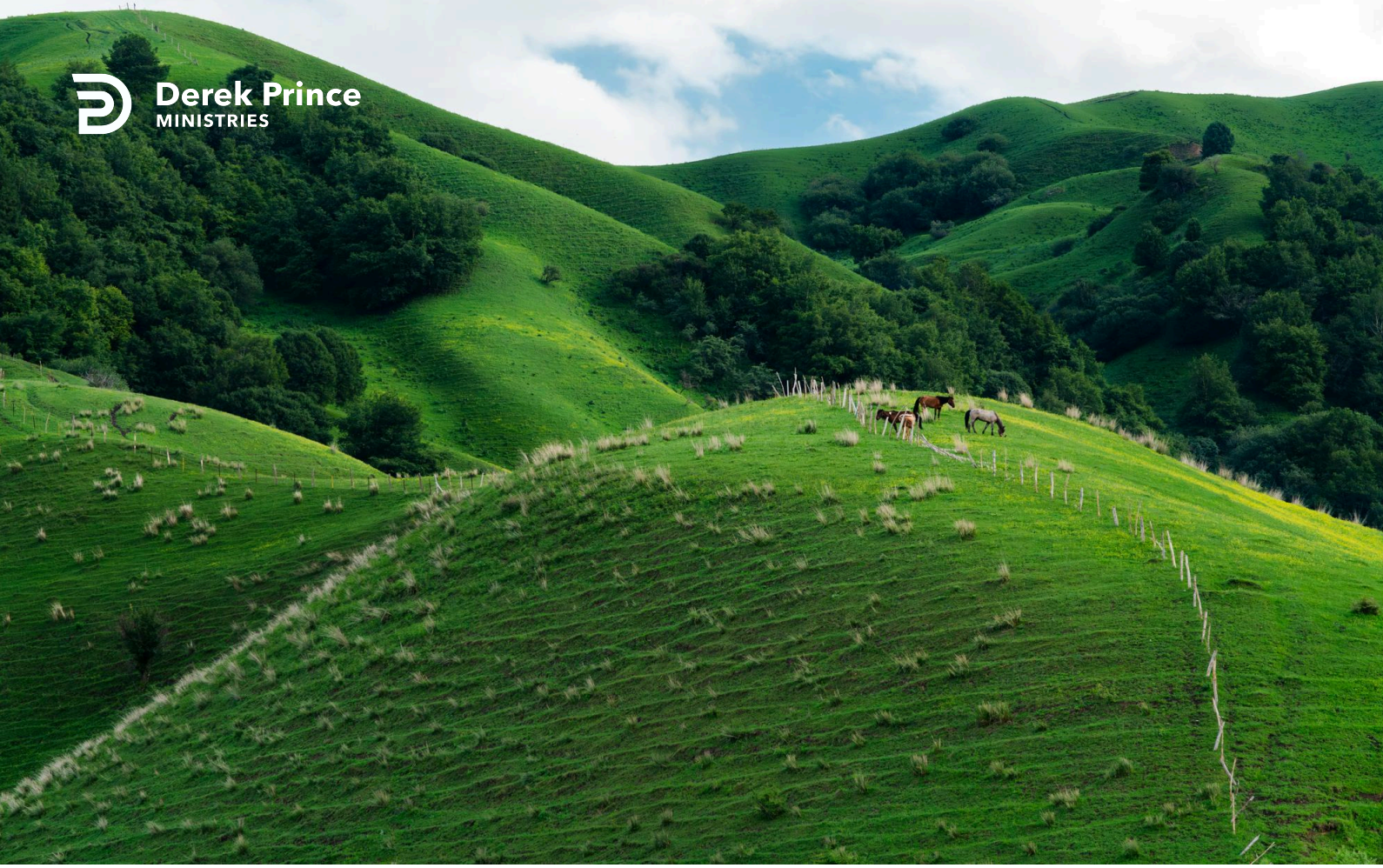

The Spirit Leads In A Certain Direction



Foundations (Day 207)
by Derek Prince

Yesterday, we finished with Paul's description of wood, hay and straw, in other words, many 'Christian' activities that are not instigated or inspired by the Holy Spirit. In contrast, one of the distinguishing marks of the New Testament Church is the direct, continued, supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit in all its activities. Out of many possible examples of this in the book of Acts, let us consider one very characteristic incident from Paul's second missionary journey, on which he was accompanied by Silas.

> "Now when they had gone through Phrygia and the region of Galatia, they were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia. After they had come to Mysia, they tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them. So passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas. And a vision appeared to Paul in the night. A man of Macedonia stood and pleaded with him, saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.' Now after he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go to Macedonia, concluding that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel to them." (Acts 16:6-10)

In considering this passage, we must bear in mind that Paul and Silas in their missionary undertaking were fulfilling the direct commission of Jesus to His disciples.

> "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations (Matt. 28:19). Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15)

Notice how all-inclusive this commission is: "all the nations... every creature."

In fulfilment of this commission, Paul and Silas had been preaching in Phrygia and Galatia – in the central part of what we today call Asia Minor. Their next obvious move would have been into the province of Asia, on the western edge of Asia Minor. However, the record of Acts says, "They were forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word in Asia." As a result, they moved to the north of Asia, into Mysia.

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From here, their next obvious move would have been northeast into Bithynia. However, at this point Acts records:

> "They tried to go into Bithynia, but the Spirit did not permit them." (Acts 16:7)

Both of the obvious doors of evangelisation – into Asia on the one side and into Bithynia on the other side – were closed to them by the direct, explicit decree of the Holy Spirit.

Doubtless, Paul and Silas began to wonder what God's plan for them could be or what course they should follow next. But at this point Paul had a vision in the night of a man of Macedonia saying, "Come over to Macedonia and help us" (v. 9). Without further question, they immediately realised that God was directing them to Macedonia – in the northern part of Greece and the south-eastern corner of Europe. In this way the gospel was first brought out of Asia into Europe.

Devotional

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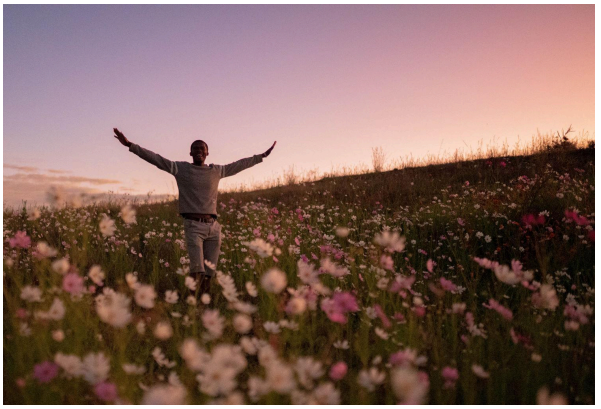

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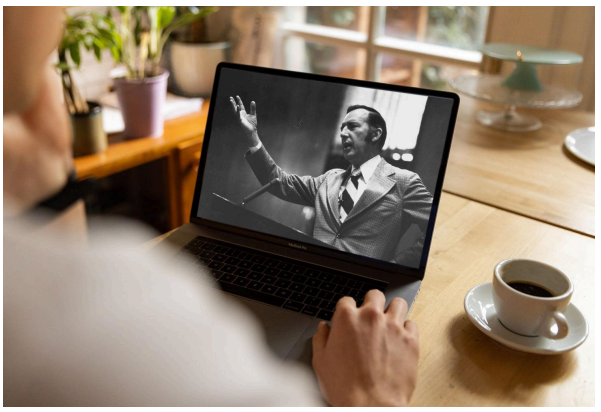

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