

WHEN GOD SAYS NO, REMEMBER HE MUST HAVE A REASON ACTS 16
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MUST HAVE A REASON. ACTS 16:6-7

Now when they had gone throughout Pheygia and the region of Galatia and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, after they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia but the Spirit suffered them not.

One of the most disconcerting things in the world is the idea that God is either deaf or unconcerned with His people. To pray sincerely and apparently not be heard, to serve the Lord and be confronted by an impassable barrier, or to give of one's best and receive no cooperation from heaven is devastating. Inevitably the question arises, "Why has God done this to me?" Unless a person carefully and patiently waits for an answer, his or her soul may become embittered. Families often pray for the healing of a loved one, only to lose that person in death. A wife may pray for the salvation of her husband but face increasing intolerance. When God says no, He has a reason for so doing.

The Mystery of Closed Doors

Paul, the intrepid missionary, had problems! Seemingly, his efforts were fruitless; he had run into a wall! His party had traveled many miles and in spite of many difficulties had reached the populous areas of Asia Pagans needed to hear the Gospel, but for some inscrutable reason, God had forbidden His servants to preach. Paul was frustrated. Why had the Lord brought him so far only to prevent him from telling the crowds about the Savior?

"They were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia." To be forbidden to preach in a village was disappointing, but at least another village could be found within a few miles. To be prevented from preaching the gospel in Asia meant a forced march of more than six hundred miles over difficult terrain before Paul could make his exit from the forbidden area.

"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. And after he had seen the vision, immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia" (Acts 16:9-10). When God closes a door in one place, He is often about to open a larger one elsewhere. When Elijah's brook dried up it became evident the Lord desired his presence in Zarephath (see 1 Kings 17:7-9).

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The Misery of Continuing Doubt

Mary and Martha were very proud; Jesus of Nazareth had made their home a stopping place on the way to and from Jerusalem. His favorite food and Martha's expertise transformed every meal into a banquet. Then came tragedy and disillusionment. Lazarus became desperately ill, and his life was in jeopardy. "Therefore his sisters sent unto him, saying, Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick. When Jesus heard that, he said, This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of man might be glorified thereby.

When he had heard therefore that he was sick he abode two days still in the same place where he was" (John 11 :3-6).

It was incredible! Jesus had disregarded their appeal for help. Their Friend had refused to respond to their appeal. His preaching was more important than their pain! Could He not have come to their aid? Nothing would have been lost; the people would have followed Him, and His speech could have been concluded in Bethany. It was significant that even when He did come a few days later Mary still sat in the house. Delayed blessings sometimes transform despair into delight

The Meaning of Certain Directions

The Wise Men were elated! Their long arduous journey was fulfilled with indescribable joy! They had seen the King! The scholars, who had been sufficiently wise to understand the message in the sky, had been even more wise to worship in a stable. Now, as had been previously arranged, they were ready to return to King Herod. The camels were rested, and the luggage was packed. Then, suddenly and unexpectedly, God said, "No." Those travelers were wise not to argue with the Lord. It became evident the new directions possibly: (a) preserved their lives because Herod might have ordered their execution; (b) prolonged their happiness because they did not participate in any plot to kill the infant Christ; (c) protected the Child who would be the salvation of a lost world.

They were in alignment with the will of the Almighty. When God said, "No," the lions were stilled as Daniel entered their den. The waves could not fall on the Hebrews who were fleeing from Pharaoh. It is wise to remember God always knows what He is doing. It is better to praise Him than to pout!

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