

ACTS 17:1-15 SECOND MISSIONARY JOURNEY CONTINUES: TO THESSALONICA AND BEREIA

Having been asked by city officials to leave Philippi, Paul and his evangelistic team move on to Thessalonica leaving Luke behind to stabilize believers. Paul's strategy was first to evangelize major seats of government and commerce knowing that once established there, Christianity would spread to surrounding areas. Luke often records places that Paul did not preach (as in 17:1).

17:1-10 At Thessalonica

v. 1, 2 **THEIR GEOGRAPHIC MOVEMENT**: they move south and west along the famous _____ Highway, **33 miles** to Amphipolis, **30 more** to Apollonia, and **37 more** to **Thessalonica** (modern Salonica). Apparently, Apollonia and Amphipolis had no synagogue, so Paul did not preach there.

THESSALONICA:

- the capital of one of the four districts of Roman _____.
- a city named for the half-sister of Alexander the Great.
- a seaport of great importance to commerce on the Aegean Sea.
- a "free-city" meaning it was self-governing in all of its internal affairs, a status like that of Tarsus, Athens, and Antioch of Syria.

v. 2, 3 **THEIR SYNOGOGICAL METHODOLOGY** ("as his custom or manner was"):

1. "**He reasoned* with them out of the _____.**"
*διαλεγομαι/dialeogoumai in the aorist indicative: "to discuss, debate, dialogue."
NOTE: his evangelism was based on the Word of God.

2. "**For three sabbaths.**" Sometime after which he was asked to leave town.

HOW LONG WAS PAUL AT THESSALONICA? Minimally, _____ weeks; maximally, _____ months. Long enough to be employed (see I Thess. 2:9, written one year later); long enough to teach them eschatology (see II Thess. 2:1-5). Incredible statements!

3. "**Opening**" (**expounding**) and "**alleging**" (**proving**) three things about Messiah:

- that He (Messiah/Christ) must needs* have suffered.
- *imperfect tense of δεω/deo meaning, his suffering which included death "was necessary due to the nature of things". Paul perhaps used Isaiah 53 and Psalm 22 here.
- that Messiah must needs have risen from the dead. Psalm 16:9, 10
- that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah (the Christ). For this point, the Apostle used the historical facts.

v. 4 **POSITIVE RESULTS OF THEIR PREACHING**

- Some believed: the verb is aorist passive of peitho, lit. "were persuaded."
_____, Paul's host (v. 7) was one of these. His name is a Greek equivalent of Joshua.
- Of these, a great throng were Greeks who had proselytized to Jewish worship of Jehovah.
- And many were "**chief women**:" i.e., educated wives of principle men who enjoyed a high level on the social ladder in Thessalonica. Like Lydia at Philippi, 16:14; others at Berea, 17:12; Demaris in Athens, 17:34; see also Rom. 16 where of the 26 names mentioned, at least 1/3 are women!

(OVER)

v. 5-10 NEGATIVE RESULTS OF THEIR PREACHING

- **v. 5, envy and dissimulation:** jealous Jews lead a mob revolt on the house of Jason, Paul's host.
 - **v. 6, scapegoating:** not finding Paul, they drag Jason and other believers to the civil authorities.
 - **v. 6b-7, accusations:**
 - “...these (Paul and his team) have unsettled the entire world.” REALLY!
 - “...Jason received and housed them.”
 - “...these are seditious and guilty of treason before Caesar because they keep saying that Jesus is King.”
- This last charge could not be ignored by any civil authority without jeopardizing his own head.
- **v. 8-10 Resolution:** Jason is coerced into putting a sizeable _____ (“security:” KJV) to gain their freedom most likely under the condition of forfeiture and even greater consequence if Paul did not leave and stay gone. This explains I Thess. 2:18 where Paul states, “Satan hindered me from returning.” Paul feared for Jason's life.

POINT: the pattern of positive/negative response to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ was the same in Thessalonica as it was in Jerusalem, Philippi, Iconium, Lystra, Derbe, and Duluth!

17:10-14 At Berea

- v. 10** Paul, Timothy and Silas are hustled out of town by night: they move **on to Berea, 50 miles southwest** of Thessalonica. There they “kept going” into the synagogue (“went” in KJV is an imperfect active indicative verb: they kept entering; it was not a one time thing.)

v. 11, 12 AT LAST: OPENNESS TO GOD'S WORD IN A SYNAGOGUE!

Note the progress of the action:

First, they “received the word of God” = “welcomed,” “eagerly accepted”

Second, “with all readiness of mind;” that is, ardently, passionately.

Third, they became very personally involved “searching the Scriptures (O.T.) daily to verify the truth of the message.”

Fourth, (v. 12): many believed (aorist tense) the Gospel and were saved.

POINT: Believing the Old Testament, they believed the Gospel (see John 5:46 for Jesus' words in this regard).

- v. 13, 14** The pattern continues: Paul preaches; some believe; hostile Jews from out of town stir-up trouble; Paul is forced to leave town.

Paul moves on by sea to Athens. Silas and Timothy are left behind to teach and edify the believers.

For Bible-History Buffs

Paul goes to Athens without his team; Luke stayed in Philippi, Silas and Timothy in Berea. Paul's stay in Athens was brief; from there he moved on to Corinth (Acts 18:1). The movements of Timothy and Silas are as follows:

- Paul leaves them at Berea. Once he reaches Athens, he sends word back that they join him asap (Acts 17:14, 15).
- They rejoin Paul in Athens, but he immediately dispatches them back to Macedonia: Timothy to Thessalonica (I Thess. 3:1, 2) and Silas most likely to Philippi (Acts 18:5).
- Paul moves from Athens to Corinth (Acts 18:1) where he abides minimally for 1½ years (Acts 18:11).
- Silas and Timothy rejoin him in Corinth and report on the churches in Macedonia (I Thess. 3:6; Acts 18:5).
- After their reports, Paul wrote I Thessalonians from Corinth; then about a year later, II Thessalonians from the same city.