

“The Gospel Spreads Through Macedonia”

Acts 17:1-15

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Teaching Aim: To examine the ministries of Paul and Silas as they spread the good news of the gospel throughout Macedonia. To recognize the interference that came from many of the Jews. To realize the Bereans were more fair-minded than the Thessalonians, eagerly receiving the Word of God and searching the Scriptures daily to ensure what Paul said was true. To understand Christians today should be Bereans in the way they handle the Word of God.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: Paul and Silas take the good news of the gospel to Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-5)

1. After being beaten, jailed, and forced out of Philippi, Paul and Silas began their 100-mile journey to Thessalonica. What two cities did Paul and Silas pass through on the way (**vs. 1**)? Why do you think they passed through these cities rather than staying and preaching to the people there?
2. Thessalonica was the capital of Macedonia with a population of around 200,000 people. The city was a free city with its own elected officials. Why do you think Paul chose this city to minister in? Do we still find big cities being used to spread modern ideologies today? How do you see this principle at work in our own country?
3. According to **verse 2**, what might be another reason that Paul chose Thessalonica as his base? What was Paul’s general strategy whenever he arrived in a new city? Do you know the Scriptures well enough to reason with others about them? What are some steps you can take to bolster your own understanding of Sacred Scripture?
4. Does **verse 2** indicate that Paul was only in Thessalonica for three Sabbaths? Why or why not? (See **Phil. 4:15-16; 1 Thess. 2:9; 2 Thess. 3:7-10**) Were most of the people converted to Christ in Thessalonica Jews or Gentiles (**vs. 4**)? What does this teach us about the focus of Paul’s ministry for most of his time in the capital?

5. What was the focus of Paul's teaching when addressing the Jews (**vs. 3**)? John Stott has written, "*Christianity is in its very essence a resurrection religion.*" Why? What were the Jews looking for in the Messiah? Why did Jesus not measure up in their eyes? Do the Scriptures teach that the Messiah would have to die and be resurrected from the dead? (See **Psa. 22; Isa. 53; Zech. 12:10; Psa. 16:9-11**)

6. In light of **verse 4**, why do you think so many of the ruling Jews became envious of Paul and Silas (**vs. 5**)? What did they do as a result of their jealousy? Has jealousy ever led you to do something that you later regretted?

7. Because of jealousy, the Jews gathered a group of evil men in the city and created a mob scene (**vs. 5**). How did this mob effect the city of Thessalonica? What was the mob's goal in going to the home of Jason? Who was Jason and how should he be remembered by the church?

Part II: A mob scene in Thessalonica; Jason and the others dragged before the city rulers (Acts 17:6-9)

1. Who was the mob apparently looking for (**vs. 6**)? Were Paul and Silas home at the time? What was their charge against Paul and Silas? Whom did they go after when they could not find Paul and Silas?

2. Were the accusers, in fact, complimenting Paul and Silas without realizing it (**vs. 6**)? Why do you think the world isn't affected like this today by the Christian faith? When is the last time you shared the gospel of Jesus Christ with someone? Should sharing the gospel be a regular practice for all believers? Then why do so many Christians not share the gospel?

3. What was Jason charged with (**vs. 7**)? What are all Christians guilty of (**vs. 7**)? Was this charge totally true, or just partially? (See **Rom. 13:1-7; Tit. 3:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:13-15**) Was this a similar charge to what had been made against Jesus? (See **Luke 23:1-2**)

4. It seems strange that the Jews in Thessalonica would come out in support publicly for Caesar in anyway, but they did (**vs. 7**). Did the Jewish accusers of Jesus do the same thing? (See **John 19:15**) Why? What can we learn about Christ's Kingdom from **John 18:36**?

5. Jason and the other believers should be included among the many unsung heroes of the Bible. Why? (See **Heb. 11**) What are you doing to minister behind the scenes in the name of Jesus?

6. How did the partially true charges of the Jews affect the people of Thessalonica along with their rulers (**vs. 8**)? Should we believe what people say just because they are "*religious*?" What truth can every believer learn from **2 Cor. 11:13-15**? What are some ways that we see Satan's emissaries at work in the church today? What can we expect from these ambassadors of Satan? (See **Matt. 7:15-16**)

7. According to **verse 9**, what were Jason and the other believers forced to do? How is this similar to posting bond today? What kind of danger did this put Jason and the other believers in? In **1 Thess. 2:17-18**, Paul spoke of Satan hindering him from returning to Thessalonica. Could this pressure on Jason and the other believers be what Paul was referring to? Why or why not? Why did Paul choose not to return to Thessalonica?

8. Did the attacks of Satan stop the ministry in Thessalonica? (See **1 Thess. 1:8-9**) Do you allow the attacks from Satan to stop you when it comes to ministry? Why is it important for Christians to keep pressing on in the name of Jesus no matter what Satan hits us with? (See **1 John 4:4**)

Part III: Paul and Silas bring the gospel to Berea (Acts 17:10-15)

1. Apparently, Paul and Silas were still in the city when the mob scene took place. What did the believers in Thessalonica do to protect them (**vs. 10**)? When do we see a similar situation occurring to Paul? (See **Acts 9:25; 2 Cor. 11:32-33**) Have you ever been attacked for your faith? If so, how did you handle the attack? Did it discourage you in your walk with Christ or make you more determined?
2. What is the first thing Paul and Silas did after completing the 45–50-mile journey from Thessalonica to Berea (**vs. 10**)? What can we learn about the two men from this?
3. What three characteristics can we learn about the Berean Jews from **verse 11**? Why was it important for them to be open-minded? Are you excited each time you open up your Bible, or does it seem more like a duty to you? Why is it important for every Christian to examine the Scriptures daily to see if what they are being taught is true?
4. How did the Berean Jews respond to hearing the good news of the gospel (**vs. 12**)? How about the Gentiles? Satan's emissaries are always busy, especially when Christians are making progress spiritually. What are some ways the enemy has attacked you in the past?
5. What happened to disrupt the ministry in **verse 13**? How effective were the Jews at stirring up the crowd (**vs. 14**)? According to **verse 14**, who was the target of their attack? Why did the Jews go after Paul and not the others? Why do you think the Jews allowed both Silas and Timothy to remain with the Bereans? Note: Timothy most likely was not with Paul and Silas in Thessalonica; the Jews did not know him. Because of this, he would later be sent back to Thessalonica to minister to the church on behalf of Paul. (See **1 Thess. 3:1-3**)

6. How devoted were the Christians in Berea to making sure Paul made the 220-mile trip to Athens safely (**vs. 15**)? Did Paul travel by land or sea to Athens? (See Commentaries) Who did Paul send for after his safe arrival in Athens?

7. From Athens Paul travelled to the city of Corinth. (See **Acts 18:1**) It was from Corinth that Paul would write the Epistles of **1st and 2nd Thessalonians** in A.D. 51 or 52. What are some of the things that impress you the most about Paul's ministry?

8. What can we learn about our salvation from **John 14:6** and **John 1:11-12**?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- Paul always began his ministry by attempting to take the gospel to the Jews first.
- Paul taught about Jesus in the synagogues until the Jews would not allow him to any longer.
- Once the Jews rejected Paul's message, he took the gospel to the Gentiles.
- The resurrection of Jesus Christ is central to the gospel message; Christianity stands or falls on the resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Paul and Silas were accused of turning the world upside down by sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ; oh that we would have Christians turn the world upside down for Jesus today.
- The Bereans were more fair-minded than the Thessalonians, eagerly receiving the Word of God and searching the Scriptures daily to make sure what they were being taught was true.
- The Scriptures and the Scriptures alone are the authority for what we believe.