

## The Gospel Continues in Macedonia – Acts 17:1-15

### I. The Gospel Witness in Thessalonica (1-10a)

#### A. The Method and Result of the Gospel (1-5a)

##### 1. The Characteristics of Paul's Witness (1-3)

###### a. Paul's Witness Was Strategic (1)

###### i. Thessalonica is the capital of the Roman Province of Macedonia

- It was the largest and most prosperous city
- Paul was intentional in the city he chose
- Paul used a strategy to make the greatest impact possible with the gospel
- Thessalonica had a synagogue in the city, Paul's usual starting place

###### ii. They passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia

- There were no synagogues in these cities
- They weren't passing through because they didn't want to give them the gospel
- They were being strategic with their time and ministry – By securing churches in the biggest and most influential cities of the province, the gospel would spread to the other cities
- Perhaps they were learning from their earlier travels

###### b. Paul's Witness Was Consistent (2)

###### i. Customary for Paul to begin in the synagogues

- They would already be familiar with OT prophecies of Messiah
- They would have a background conducive to understanding the gospel

###### ii. Paul spent three Sabbaths preaching in the synagogue

- He was persistent in engaging the people with the truth
- He may not have seen fruit each time, but continued
- He was passionate about evangelism and discipleship

###### c. Paul's Witness Was Engaging (3)

###### i. Paul "reasoned" with them from the scriptures

- The word is *dialegomai* – (where we get the word dialogue) – But Paul was engaging them in preaching, but also hearing their objections and questions

- Paul did not reason from his own intellect or understandings. The word of God is the power by which he reasoned
  - ii. Paul Opened (explained) and Alleged (proved)
    - He opened up the truth from the Scripture
    - He made his arguments and proved his case from the Scriptures
    - He was proving that it was necessary for Jesus to suffer, and rise from the dead
      - The Jews rejected the idea that God's messiah would bear the curse of being hung on a tree
      - The Jews rejected the idea that the Messiah had to be executed and suffer (Isa. 53?)
      - Paul was proving God's Messiah (the one they were waiting for) had to die and rise from the dead
      - What are some reasons Jesus HAD to die and rise from the dead?
  - iii. Paul Proclaimed Jesus as The Christ (Messiah)
- 2. The Effect of the Gospel (4-5a)
  - a. The Gospel Converts Many (4)
    - i. Some were Persuaded – i.e. They believed that Jesus was God's Messiah, the salvation of Israel and the world
    - ii. They Joined Paul and Silas – They didn't just believe with their minds, they dedicated themselves to serving Christ and his message
  - b. The Gospel Enrages Many (5a)
    - i. Some of the Jews were Jealous
      - Why were they Jealous?
      - Why would the Messiah coming cause them to be Jealous – What do they have to lose?
    - ii. The Jews incited wicked men to form a Mob
      - They refused to accept the gospel and wanted to stop others from accepting it
      - They desired the persecution of Paul and Silas
      - At this point, who's side are these Jews on, God's or Satan's?
- B. The Persecution Following the Gospel (5b-9)
  - 1. The Mob Turns To the Believers Who Aid the Mission (5b-7a)
    - a. The Mob Attacks Jason's House

- i. The Mob is looking to arrest Paul and Silas
    - ii. Since they can't find Paul and Silas, they attack Jason, the one who boarded them in his house
    - iii. Persecution is not just for those preaching, it is for all those who aid the gospel
      - All believers should be involved in the mission in some way
      - Therefore all believers will be persecuted
      - We should be identified with the gospel publically even if it means persecution
  - b. The Mob Brings Jason to Authorities (6a)
    - i. Jason and other members of the church are arrested and taken before the leaders of the city
    - ii. They are "dragged" before the leaders
  - c. The Mob Identifies Jason as an Accessory (6b-7a)
    - i. They claim the men have turned the world upside down
      - The historian Seutonius writes that Emperor Claudius expelled all the Jews from Rome in 49 A.D. because "they were constantly rioting at the instigation of Crestus (Christ)"
        - Remember at this time, Rome saw Christianity as a sect of Judaism
      - Evidently they had heard of the gospel's effects in other cities
      - They knew that the preaching of the Messiah changed lives and therefore changed communities and practices
    - ii. They charge Jason with "receiving" Paul and Silas
      - Here Jason is charged as an accomplice
      - He is persecuted for being hospitable to the believers
2. The Authorities Falsely Accuse and Punish the Believers (7b-9)
- a. They Accuse them With Teaching Rebellion Against the Empire (7b)
    - i. They accuse Jason of acting against the decrees of Caesar
    - ii. They accuse them of saying Jesus was a threat to the Roman Empire
      - Are either of these things true?
      - Why would Jew bring these accusations against Christians to the Romans?
  - b. The Authorities Fine Jason and Release them (8-9)
    - i. They made him pay a security (a fine)

- ii. They were disturbed that this teaching was also here in Macedonia
    - iii. They had no direct evidence so they let them go after punishing them with a fine
  - C. Paul and Silas Depart to Berea For the Church's Safety (10a)
- II. The Gospel Witness in Berea (10b-15)
  - A. The Success of the Gospel in Berea (10b-12)
    - 1. They Preach in the Berean Synagogue (10b)
    - 2. The Bereans were More Noble than the Thessalonians (11)
      - a. They received the word with eagerness
      - b. They examined the Scriptures to prove the word
        - i. They proved what Paul was saying by the Word
        - ii. They did not just take his word for it
        - iii. This is lauded as being "noble" – something we should emulate.
        - iv. We should judge all things by the word
    - 3. The Gospel Converts Many in Berea (12)
  - B. Opposition Follows Even in Success (13-15)
    - 1. Thessalonian Jews Came to oppose the gospel in Berea (13)
      - a. They followed the missionaries
      - b. They agitated and stirred up the crowds
      - c. Even when the gospel converts souls in numbers, opposition will always follow
    - 2. Paul Departs and Goes to Athens (14-15a)
    - 3. Paul Sends For Silas and Timothy Later (15b)