



Mission

Taking Jesus
to the World

Responses Will Vary

Acts 17:1-15

Pastor Nathan Mains – Feb 7, 2010

Matthew
Mark
Luke
John

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Historical & Cultural Background

- ❑ Thessalonica, when Paul visited, was a city of 100,000+ encircling a central Agora where shopping and governing took place
- ❑ Thessalonica, for its support of Octavian in 42 BC, had become a free city, allowed by Rome to govern itself, which they did through 5 “Politarchs”
- ❑ To maintain their free status the Thessalonian Politarchs were tuned in to one main rule:
Do Nothing to Anger Rome
- ❑ Caesar worship was increasingly Rome’s way to keep the empire unified. To the question, who is our savior who gives us life, help, hope & security; the good news of whom should be broadcast throughout the empire, the answer was:
Caesar

Historical & Cultural Background

□ Being idle and lazy may have been somewhat of a Thessalonian thing

□ Paul seemed to immediately notice this and respond to it in his strategy for reaching the city

2 Thess 3:7 We were not idle when we were with you, 8 nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. 9 We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow.

10 For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."

Acts 17

[Seatback Bibles p 785]

1 *When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue.*

2 *As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue,*

and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures,

reasoned = “to dialog” > discussing, interacting

3 *explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. (NIV)*

What Scriptures might he have used?

□ *Isaiah 53:5 ...he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed*

□ *Psalm 16:10 ...you will not abandon me to the grave, nor will you let your Holy One see decay.*

□ *Isaiah 53:6 We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

11 After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.

Then Paul connects these to Jesus

"This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ," he said. -- Acts 17:3

And Paul invites them to respond > Jesus will justify you if you believe.

How did they respond?

17:4 Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas,

as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women. (NIV)

What about the rest of the Jews?

They were not happy

Acts 17:5 But the Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city.

They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd. 6 But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, 7 and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus." (NIV)

Is there anything to this?

Is Jesus a threat to Rome?

John 18:33 Pilate asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

36 Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest... But now my kingdom is from another place."

37 "You are a king, then!" said Pilate.

Jesus answered, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." (NIV)

So, what are the implications?

If Jesus is Lord, Nothing else can be

Jesus said:

"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.

-- Luke 9:23-24 (NIV)

It sounds like Jesus is saying when you follow Him some things will have to die

Like what?

If Jesus is Lord, Nothing else can be

We don't like things to change

Acts 17:8 When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil.

9 Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.

- Jason would be held personally and financially responsible for any recurrence of the recent trouble
- This effectively shuts down Paul's Mission work in Thessalonica as he wouldn't want Jason to suffer.
- This may be what Paul is referring to when he says in 1 Thess 2:18, *we wanted to come to you-- certainly I, Paul, did, again and again-- but Satan stopped us. (NIV)*

So What's the Best Next Thing now?

Acts 17:10 *As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. (NIV)*

- a safe place, 50 miles from Thessalonica and off the busy Egnatian Way



Paul's 2nd Mission Trip Continues

Time to lay low for a while?

Acts 17:10 ...On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. (NIV)

So will this be a repeat of Thessalonica?

Acts 17:11 Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness

and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. (NIV)

□ Receive God's Word with great eagerness and examine it daily to make sure what you've been taught is true

And What Happened?

Acts 17:12 Many of the Jews believed,
as did also a number of prominent Greek
women

and many Greek men.

How will the Thessalonian Jews respond
when they hear about this?

17:13 *When the Jews in Thessalonica learned that
Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea,
they went there too, agitating the crowds and
stirring them up. (NIV)*

So What's the Best
Next Thing now?
Acts 17:14 *The brothers
immediately sent Paul to
the coast,
but Silas and Timothy
stayed at Berea. (NIV)*
15 *The men who
escorted Paul brought
him to Athens
and then left with
instructions for Silas and
Timothy to join him as
soon as possible. (NIV)*



Paul's 2nd Mission Trip
Continues

Next Week:
Marketplace Outreach

- ❑ In Athens Paul models how to make the most of opportunities by starting with people where they are - Acts 17:16-33
- ❑ We'll see that not all who want to talk about spiritual things are truly interested or responsive

