

Acts Chapter 17 Handout

Thessalonica, a free city, meaning they elected their magistrates rather than having them appointed by the emperor, was the capital of Macedonia. Founded in 315 b.c., at the time of Paul's visit there might have been as many as 100,000 people living there. Paul thought this was a strategic location for the preaching of the gospel because from there you could evangelist east and west. There also was a synagogue.

v.1-10 – Having left Philippi, Paul passed through Amphipolis then Apollonia then to THESSALONICA. Paul ministered 3 Sabbath days in the synagogue and many more weeks in the city itself. He preached that Christ had to suffer, had died but was risen, and that Jesus is the Christ. Some Jews believed, devout Greeks and chief women (some women had great influence and held office). But unbelieving Jews got some hoodlums to stir up trouble, go Jason's where the apostles were staying, and not finding them, pulled Jason out and took him before rulers. "THESE THAT HAVE TURNED THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN ARE COME HITHER also" saying there is another king, Jesus, thus beging contray to the decrees of Caesar. The Jews tried to make the charges political and civil. Jason and others had to post bail. Jason ws apparently a leader in the Thessalonian synagogue, and rich. (it is traditionally believed that included in the bond was the guarantee that Paul would not return to Thessalonica during the administration of the current officials, as well as bond for themselves. (I Thess 2:17-18)

v.10-15 – Paul and Silas left by night and went to BEREIA. They entered the synagogue and taught the gospel, and the Jews there received the word and searched the scriptures daily confirming the consistency of the gospel preached with the word of God. Unbelieving Jews from Thessalonica heard and came and stirred up the people so the brethren sent Paul away by sea but Silas and Timothy stayed in Berea. Paul went to ATHENS.

v.16-18 – Paul, stirred by high level of idoloatry, met in market place daily and talked with the philosophers: Epicureans believed in pursuing a life free from pain—pleasure was the goal. They believed soul was material and deteriorate upon death. Gods had nothing to do with our day to day existence and you could not anger them or receive judgement from them. Stoics believed that God was in everything. They believed reason or Logos controlled the universe, but people were responsible for voluntary actions. They stressed virtue. They thought Paul was a babbler and chared him with being teacher of strange deities.

v.17-31 – MARS HILL SERMON – They took Paul to the Areopagus (place where Athenians discussed things of mutual interest) Paul took note that they were religious, or somewhat superstitious, but didn't know the true God. He started by referring to an altar he noticed "To the Unknown God" and put forth the idea that that God that they were ignorant of was God Almighty, the invisible creator of all things. Not made by man's hands. Needs nothing from us. IN HIM WE LIVE AND MOVE AND HAVE OUR BEING (v. 28). One day God will Judge. He talked of Christ being raised from the dead.

v.32-34 – When they heard of the resurrection, some mocked him and some said lets talk some more on this matter another time. So Paul left but some believed and joined him: Dionysius the Aeropagite and a woman Damaris.