

Valley Bible Church
Sermon Notes for March 6, 2016

The Conflict with the Jews
Acts 17:1-9

Acts 15:36-18:23 records Paul's second missionary journey to Greece, and in Acts 17 Paul, Silas and Timothy have fled persecution in Philippi and arrived in Thessalonica.

1. Entry into the Jewish synagogue (17:1-2)

Amphipolis was the hometown of Alexander the Great and was thirty-three miles southwest of Philippi. Apollonia was another twenty-seven miles along the Egnatian Way, making it a full three-day trip to Thessalonica, a large capital city.

Paul's ministry in Thessalonica lasted many weeks longer than the three Sabbath days he ministered in the synagogue. We know this because (1) the multiple gifts the Philippians provided (Philippians 4:15-16), (2) he worked to support himself (1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:7-10), and (3) most of the converts were not Jewish (1 Thessalonians 1:9).

2. Evidence of Jesus our Savior (17:3-4)

Note the centrality of Scripture and the focus on the person and work of Jesus Christ. The two parts of Paul's proclamation were:

- a. Presenting—the use of Scripture to show its authority in the matter of who Jesus was.
- b. Proving—the provision of evidence in support of the correct understanding of Scripture in the matter of who Jesus was.

This reasoning was not a simple lecture but a dialogue. The ability to converse enhances communication of truth. Being persuaded regarding the person and work of Christ involves joining with believers in the church.

An emphasis of the second missionary journey is the response of prominent women to Paul's ministry (cf. 16:14; 17:12, 34).

3. Enduring Jewish suppression (17:5-7)

Jason was a common name for Hellenistic (non-Hebrew) Jews. He was converted through Paul's ministry in the synagogue, and his home became a meeting place for the church. He is likely referenced in Romans 16:21.

The first charge made was the aiding of men who disrupted the civil peace (17:6). It is impossible to miss the irony that the Jews who recruited a mob to set the city in an uproar described Paul and Silas as “men who have upset the world.”

The second charge made was sedition, or inciting people to rebel against a government (17:7; cf. John 19:12). This charge was false since Paul taught obedience to the governing authorities (Romans 13:1). This shows that Paul taught that Jesus would reign over a future kingdom (1 Thessalonians 2:12). Teaching about future things is a major topic in both Thessalonian epistles and is intended for our comfort (1 Thessalonians 4:18).

4. Escape by Jason succeeds (17:8-9)

The pledge was an amount of money that would be forfeited if there was any more trouble that would arise.

The settlement made between Jason and the authorities to calm the uprising resulted in the departure of Paul from Thessalonica. Silas was sent away with Paul at night (cf. 17:10). Timothy would also make his way from Thessalonica to Berea (17:14).

This agreement was the reason why Paul was unable to fulfill his desire to return to Thessalonica (1 Thessalonians 2:17-18). Our desire should be to be with those whom we serve (1 Thessalonians 2:8). Timothy would be able to return a few months later (1 Thessalonians 3:2-6) to encourage them.

May we follow the faithfulness of the Thessalonians in our devotion to the Lord.