

## Chapter Seventeen – Second Journey of Paul Continued

### ACTS 17:1-4:

We began this journey with Paul and Silas in **Antioch of Syria**; they then traveled through the rest of **Syria** and through the region of **Cilicia** strengthening **the Bodies of Christ** along the way. When they had come to the area of the two cities of **Lystra and Derbe**, they will pick up young Timothy to travel with them. They delivered the decrees to these cities which strengthened them to a productive unity. From here they will travel to two new areas of Asia Minor: **Phrygia and Galatia**. Luke does not record anything about these visits and Paul will not return to these regions until **Chapter 19**.

Passing through the region of Mysia (having been forbidden by the Spirit of God to go into Asia and Bithynia at this time), Paul and his group have come to **Troas**. Here at Troas, Paul will have a vision encouraging him to go to Macedonia and bring the Gospel. As they determine to go to Macedonia, we learn that Luke joins them.

They set out across the Aegean Sea and cross with relative ease, stopping at the island of **Samothrace**, and the next day arriving at **Neapolis**, the seaport town for Philippi. From Neapolis they head straight to **Philippi**, the chief city of this region. While here, Paul would live the very words that he would later instruct the Philippian Christians to practice after him (**Philippians 4:8-9**). He would go on to bring the Gospel to already religious people, produce good works in the face of adversity, and never allow an opportunity to preach the Gospel of Jesus as the Christ to pass. There would be great success in the power of the Gospel at Philippi.

Please use the map

In this lesson, Paul is now going to continue to move through Macedonia and bring the Gospel of Jesus as the Christ.

### Text #1:

**Acts 17:1** “Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.”



**Amphipolis:** Amphipolis was about 32 miles west of Philippi and 3 miles from the Aegean Sea on the Via Egnatia. Its name, meaning "around the city" (from amphi, "around," and polis, "city"), is derived from the fact that Strymon (Strimón) River curved around the site on which it was built.

A strategic transportation center, it controlled the route from northern Greece to the Hellespont to the east, including the western approach to the timber, gold, and silver of Mount Pangaion in Thrace.

**Apollonia:** A maritime city of Macedonia located 38 miles east of Thessalonica on the Via Egnatia; its name means "belonging to Apollo." It is thought that Paul did not preach here or in Amphipolis because neither had a significant Jewish population. In any event, it is not recorded by Luke either way, other than they passed through!

**Thessalonica:** A port city about 100 miles west of Philippi and 190 miles northwest of Athens. The city was founded about 315 BC by King Cassander of Macedon, who named it after his wife Thessalonikeia, a half-sister of Alexander the Great. Her name means "victory (niki or nica) in Thessaly." The city continued to develop until Rome defeated Perseus, the last Macedonian king, in 168 BC. Rome divided the former kingdom into four independent "free" districts, then, in 146 BC, established it as a province with Thessalonica as its capital. At the time of Paul, it had a population of about 200,000, making it the largest city in Macedonia. Thessalonica was located in a natural amphitheater on the slopes of the Kortiates Mountains at the head of the Thermaic Gulf, with a view (when not obscured by a prevailing haze) of fabled Mt. Olympus across the bay. It was an important trade and communication center at the junction of the Via Egnatia and the road north to the Danube.

## Text #2:

**Acts 17:2-4** “Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, <sup>3</sup> explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and *saying*, “This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.” <sup>4</sup> And some of them were persuaded; and a great multitude of the devout Greeks, and not a few of the leading women, joined Paul and Silas.”

One point that needs to be made before we move forward is that by the pronouns found in **verse one** (“they”, instead of “we”), we see that Luke stays behind in Philippi and does not continue on with Paul, Silas, and Timothy.

**As His Custom:** Paul, upon entering Thessalonica is going to practice what we have come to see him do in every city he enters that has population of Jews large enough to have a synagogue; he will start there first.

We know by the letter that he would write back to those who obeyed the Gospel here, that along with his preaching, he also performed miracles in the support of the word.

**1 Thessalonians 1:5** “For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Spirit and in much assurance, as you know what kind of men we were among you for your sake.”

**Explaining and Demonstrating:** The use of the term “**Explaining**” (“**Opening**” in the King James), comes from the Greek word with reference to explaining or expounding. In other words, he is going to introduce the premise prior to the evidence.

The use of the term “**Demonstrating**” has had many thinking that it refers to the miracles that we have already mentioned; however, the source of the evidentiary foundations Paul is using has already been given, “**Scriptures**” – **Vs. 2**.

The Lord Himself has already used this same practice in order to open the minds of His chosen disciples – see: **Luke 24:44-46**. Paul is likewise from the Old Testament scriptures showing fulfillment of such passages as **Psalms 16, 22; Isaiah 53**; etc. in Jesus. Thus, the only conclusion is that He was the Christ!

**Results:** Some of them were “**Persuaded**” (To induce to undertake a course of action or embrace a point of view by means of argument, reasoning, or entreaty). Along with Jews who obeyed (we know that Jews obeyed as well as proselytes by the comments of **verse 5**), many devout Gentiles became members of the **Body of Christ** by obeying the Gospel, and a great many “**Leading Women**”; or “**Devout Women**” from the Greek, ‘*Sebomai*’, which is to ‘feel awe’, or ‘to worship’. So, we note that the majority of these brethren would be from the ranks of Gentiles, which would continue; we see this in the words of Paul written back to them, note:

**1 Thessalonians 1:9** “For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God”

We will additionally learn from Paul's letters, post his visit here, that he would not take assistance from these brethren and that the brethren in Philippi would send assistance to him here at Thessalonica, note:

**1 Thessalonians 2:9** “For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.”

**Philippians 4:15-16** “Now you Philippians know also that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church shared with me concerning giving and receiving but you only. <sup>16</sup> For even in Thessalonica you sent *aid* once and again for my necessities.”

**Next: “On to Berea!”**