

"The Second Missionary Journey"

Part 9

Acts 15:41-18:22

Introduction: In our study of Acts last week, Paul and Silas, along with the others had made their way from Philippi to Thessalonica. This was about a hundred-mile journey. At Thessalonica there was a synagogue and as Paul's practice was, he went there to share the Gospel.

➤ **The Church at Thessalonica**

Part 2

Notice Acts 17:1-3

Paul opened and alleged the Scriptures to them. The word "opened" means "to open that which was completely closed" and the word "alleging" means "to place beside." What Paul did here was he took the Old Testament and showed how many of the prophecies pointed to Jesus Christ and His death, burial, and resurrection. He took the Two Truths and laid them side by side to help the people see that Jesus was the Messiah. Let us notice a couple of examples.

When Paul spoke of the death of Jesus Christ he could have supported his teaching with the words of Isaiah.

Isaiah 53:4-6

⁴ *Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*

⁵ *But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.*

⁶ *All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.*

⁷ *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*

⁸ *He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken.*

⁹ *And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth.*

¹⁰ *Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand.*

When Paul spoke of the resurrection, he may have referenced Psalm 16.

Psalm 16:9-10

⁹ *Therefore my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.*

¹⁰ *For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.*

Whatever verses Paul used; this was something that had not been presented to these people before.

Application:

When I think of what took place at Thessalonica, I am reminded of all the people in our circles that have never had Jesus presented to them in this way. There are so many people who have opinions about the Bible because of something which they heard from a friend or a family member. But they have never had anyone sit down and show them the Truth from the Scriptures. Many of these people even go to church and consider themselves religious but they are blind and their spiritual eyes have never been opened. In the churches they attend the Bible is never taught so they are people who are lost in their sin and in ignorance.

Matthew 9:35-38

³⁵ *And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.*

³⁶ *But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.*

³⁷ Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;

³⁸ Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

Notice Acts 17:4

The word "believed" here means "persuaded." When Paul laid the Scriptures alongside of the Gospel the people were persuaded that what he proclaimed was the Truth. I need to just expound on this for a moment. It is not our responsibility to "persuade" people to believe the Gospel. It is not our responsibility to get them to believe. That is what God does.

1 Corinthians 3:5-9

⁵ Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?

⁶ I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase.

⁷ So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

⁸ Now he that planteth and he that watereth are one: and every man shall receive his own reward according to his own labour.

⁹ For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building.

Psalms 146:8

⁸ The LORD openeth the eyes of the blind: the LORD raiseth them that are bowed down: the LORD loveth the righteous:

Let us notice a miracle that that Jesus did which shows that only He can open the eyes of the blind.

Matthew 20:30-34

³⁰ And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David.

³¹ And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David.

³² And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you?

³³ They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened.

³⁴ So Jesus had compassion on them, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

I show you these verses and I make this point to help us all understand that we cannot open the spiritual eyes of one person. That is what God does. He gives the increase, He saves people. Our responsibility is to proclaim the Truth of His Word, pray and allow Him to use His Word to do as He sees best.

Notice Acts 17:4 again.

Here we see that as many believed they "consorted" with Paul which means they joined with him. We are also given insight as to who some of these people were. Many were Gentiles and many were chief women. The Bible tells of many women who came to Jesus and there seems to be a special attraction.

Notice Acts 17:12

Here we see that in Berea Luke mentions the women that were saved also. This emphasizes the attraction which the Gospel had with the women.

Arnold gives us some valuable insight as to why the women were so attracted to the Gospel.

"The gospel had a real appeal to women, especially women of the upper classes who were prominent citizens in the Greek cities. There is a reason for this magnetic appeal Christ had to women. These were educated women who knew the Greek philosophies and had been in the religious cults. They knew that these man-made philosophies were empty, vain and dead, offering nothing for the inward spirit. These philosophies and mystery cults were totally humanistic, full of voluptuous and degrading sexual practices which left these women devastated and filled with self-loathing. They were disgusted with free sex and they turned to Jesus Christ for forgiveness, who, in turn, gave them a sense of self-worth and value as human beings. Paul was the ideal evangelist because he knew how to reach people where they were and to bring them to the Living Christ for new life."

In many of these cities women were treated as no more than slaves. Their companions were children and slaves. Then when Christianity entered into these cities this all changed.

Ephesians 5:25-28

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

²⁶ That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,

²⁷ That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.

²⁸ So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.

Colossians 3:19

¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.

This is just a few verses that show what Christianity brought into the family and how the woman was to be loved and cherished by her husband. This was all new to these people and therefore we can clearly understand why the women were so attracted to the Gospel. Let me show you what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5:31-32

³¹ It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

³² But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

The religious leaders of Jesus' day taught that a man could divorce his wife for just about any reason and they did. Jesus corrected that teaching here in these verses. But what we need to understand is that marriage was not seen as sacred until Christianity entered.

Notice Acts 17:5-6

It was not long after the salvation of the people that Satan began to organize opposition and persecution. The Jews who were not saved were envious of the following which Paul had gathered. These Gentiles were attending the synagogue and they had been embracing Judaism but when the Gospel was preached, they embraced Jesus Christ whom these Jews hated. The Jews then gathered a group of men who are called "lewd fellows of the baser

sort." This was simply a group of thugs who were willing to stir up trouble. Notice how the Amplified Bible translates this verse:

"But the [unbelieving] Jews became jealous, and taking along some thugs from [the lowlifes in] the marketplace, they formed a mob and set the city in an uproar; and then attacking Jason's house tried to bring Paul and Silas out to the people."

Application:

This reminds me of the words of Solomon.

Ecclesiastes 1:9-10

⁹ *The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun.*

¹⁰ *Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.*

Satan would use this group of unbelievers in an attempt to stop Paul and Silas from spreading the Gospel. Notice what happened to Jesus.

Matthew 26:60

⁶⁰ *But found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses,*

The religious leaders used false witnesses against Jesus. The same was done to Stephen.

Acts 6:11-13

¹¹ *Then they suborned men, which said, We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God.*

¹³ *And set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law:*

Conclusion:

We just witnessed the same thing in our day when the "HIRED" protesters went to the colleges and universities and protested against the Jews right to defend themselves. Satan's ways do not change. The more we study the Word of God the more we learn of how our enemy works which helps us to see the spiritual attacks in our day and it gives us a Biblical perspective on what is unfolding.