

"The Second Missionary Journey"

Part 10

Acts 15:41-18:22

Introduction: Last week in our study we left Paul and Silas in Thessalonica where the opposition was starting to heat up. When Paul and company came to Thessalonica and preached the Gospel many believed. Of the believers there were Gentiles and a large number of chief women. This acceptance of the Gospel caused the unbelieving Jews to be envious. Those who were saved of the Gentiles were Jewish proselytes who had attended the synagogue and now they were turning away from Judaism to Christianity. The unbelieving Jews were upset because they were losing their influence over those who were now believers. They then went into the marketplace and pulled together a group which the Bible refers to as "lewd fellows of the baser sort," these were thugs who were troublemakers to begin with and they stirred up the entire city.

Notice Acts 17:1-5

Jason was a believer who opened his house to the missionaries and the Jews knew where they were staying therefore, they went to Jason's to bring them out to face the crowd.

➤ **The Church at Thessalonica**

Part 3

➤ **The Accusations**

Notice Acts 17:6-7

There are two accusations here which the enemy used to stir up the city. The first was that they had turned the world upside down. Some Bible versions translate this as "these men have upset the world." The preaching of the Gospel had surely upset many that heard it and for several reasons. First of all, it takes away man's ability to work and earn forgiveness. It also completely nullifies any claim that man would have to being good. When Jesus walked the earth, His teaching was in complete contrast to what the world believes.

Notice the words of John Phillips.

"Wherever Paul went, things happened. Souls were saved, people took sides, feelings were stirred, decisions were made, the lines were drawn. Paul did not slip into town, hold a few quiet meetings, enjoy some good home cooking, pick up a generous honorarium, and slip back out of town again without the city knowing or caring that the gospel had been

preached at all. Everybody knew when Paul came to town. Passions were stirred, things happened, the place was turned upside down."

Luke 12:16-21

¹⁶ And he spake a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully:

¹⁷ And he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits?

¹⁸ And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods.

¹⁹ And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years; take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.

²⁰ But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou hast provided?

²¹ So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.

Here in these verses Jesus made it clear that worldly riches were not what was important. This is certainly against the teaching of the world's philosophy. Today in our society all the focus is upon financial gain, but that is not what is important. That which is eternal is important and therefore the Truth of Jesus' teachings do upset the world.

Notice Acts 17:6 again.

Many have adopted the phrase "***These that have turned the world upside down,***" and carried this into the church to say that this is what we are called to do. Notice what is quoted by A. B. Simpson.

"There is a story told of an eccentric English evangelist who took that text for one of his open-air sermons in a new place. He began by saying, "First, the world is wrong side up. Second, the world must be turned upside down. Third, we are the men to set it right." In the man's quaint phrases, this is really the purpose of the gospel. It is God's way of making things right."

This sounds great and is often used to motivate believers but it is completely inaccurate. Terminology matters and so we must be very careful with our words. Just like people who claim that as believers we are building the Kingdom, they mean well but they are not correct with their terminology. We are not building the Kingdom we are called to be used

of Jesus Christ as He builds the church. In the same way, to say that we are here to change the world is an inaccurate statement. That is really "Kingdom now theology." We are not called to change the world only Jesus can change the world and He will do so when He returns at the end of the Tribulation. We are called salt and light.

Matthew 5:13-16

¹³ Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

¹⁴ Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

¹⁵ Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

¹⁶ Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

We may slow the decay of the world but we are never going to turn the world upside down nor are we ever going to set the world aright. We are not called to do so.

Matthew 13:24-30

²⁴ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

²⁵ But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

²⁶ But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

²⁷ So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares?

²⁸ He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

²⁹ But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

³⁰ Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

The tares will be among the wheat until Jesus separates the two. Let me remind you of the words of Pink on this thought.

"We see here the worthlessness of "reform" movements and efforts. It is an idle dream that we can improve the world by gathering out noxious weeds-banish drunkenness and immorality, purify politics, etc. Men might as well attempt to purify the waters of the Dead Sea! The Lord has said, "Let both grow together till harvest." Then do not waste your time on the cultivation of the tares. "Preach the Gospel" is our marching orders."

Getting back to Acts, the Jews had declared that Paul and company had turned the world upside down or that they upset the world.

Notice Acts 17:7-8

The other accusation brought against the missionaries was that they were revolutionaries who were against Caesar and the Roman Government. This was the very accusation brought against Jesus.

John 19:12-15

¹² *And from thenceforth Pilate sought to release him: but the Jews cried out, saying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar.*

¹³ *When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus forth, and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called the Pavement, but in the Hebrew, Gabbatha.*

¹⁴ *And it was the preparation of the passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!*

¹⁵ *But they cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.*

Verse 15 is very sad. They claimed the only king they had was Caesar. How this must have broken the heart of the True King who had come to offer them the Kingdom. The Jews in Acts 17 were saying the same thing. They did not want God as their King they were content with Caesar.

This accusation was the one that stirred up the city because it played on the fear of the people. Notice the words of Whitcomb.

"Caesar Augustus and his successors in the Roman Empire were very frightened by the possibility of an insurrection to overthrow their power. They had armies everywhere, seeking to prevent any and all uprisings. They were threatened by Jesus who was called 'the King of the Jews.'"

If the news of this accusation reached the Roman leaders it could mean serious trouble for the city of Thessalonica. This is what the people feared and this accusation then stirred the city. As we read on, we can see that the situation became very serious for Paul.

Notice Acts 17:9-10

It came to the point where Paul and Silas had to leave and move on to Berea. But Paul was there long enough to lay a strong foundation. No doubt he had taught about how Jesus would return and destroy the kingdoms of this world and set up His Kingdom. Let me show you some of what Paul taught.

1 Thessalonians 5:1-6

But of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

² *For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*

³ *For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*

⁴ *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.*

⁵ *Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.*

⁶ *Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.*

2 Thessalonians 2:1-5

Now we beseech you, brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him,

² *That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.*

³ *Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition;*

⁴ *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*

⁵ *Remember ye not, that, when I was yet with you, I told you these things?*

Paul taught these believers about the coming Tribulation so he would have also taught about the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion/Application:

Satan knew what these people feared in their lives. He knew they would fear the treat of stirring up the Roman Government. So, Satan used the Jews to bring fear upon the city to see that the Gospel heralds were run out of town. But not before the Lord started a church.

Satan knows our fears and he will use them in an attempt to silence us or to cause us to live in such a way that Jesus Christ's image is clouded within our lives. Let us understand that there is nothing we need to fear and when we are living ion a way that Jesus can be seen in us, we should expect to meet opposition.

Romans 8:31, 35-39

³¹ *What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?*

³⁵ *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?*

³⁶ *As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.*

³⁷ *Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.*

³⁸ *For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come,*

³⁹ *Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

