



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Revival in the Capital: A Great Multitude Believes!

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Acts 17:1-4 “Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. 2) And according to Paul’s custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, 3) explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, ‘This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.’ 4) And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a great multitude of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women.” (NASB)

“BOTH THE ACTS AND THE EPISTLES, HOWEVER, LAY GREAT STRESS UPON THE CONTENT OF THE MESSAGE DELIVERED BY PAUL. IT WAS ESSENTIALLY AN EXPOSITION OF THE SCRIPTURES, WHICH, AFTER ALL HAS BEEN SAID, IS THE MOST VALUABLE FORM OF PREACHING IN THE PRESENT DAY. HIS ONE THEME WAS JESUS CHRIST, WHOM HE PROVED TO BE THE TRUE SAVIOR, THE PROMISED MESSIAH, AND WHO, AS THE OLD TESTAMENT DECLARED, MUST NECESSARILY HAVE SUFFERED FOR SIN AND RISEN FROM THE DEAD. THE EPISTLES SHOW FURTHER THE GREAT STRESS LAID UPON THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST AS THE GLORIOUS KING.”
CHARLES ERDMAN

Why does Paul not include a capital for evangelism which he travelled through on the way to Thessalonica? Is Paul and his mission team on horseback as they traveled? What did Paul’s “custom” include? Did the Jews see their Messiah as an exalted king or a suffering servant? What was Paul most committed to in his missionary journeys? Who were the “some” who “were persuaded”? How many people might this “great multitude” be? Why are the “leading women” emphasized in this capital city?

FOCUS ON FUTURE BIBLE STUDIES:

- MARCH 8: SELECTED SCRIPTURES PASTOR RICH RYAN WILL BE TEACHING THE BIBLE STUDY
- MAY 23-25: ACTS 17:5-9 THE TEAM WHO TURNED THE WORLD UPSIDE DOWN

This spiritual seal team had arrived at the gold mine of the Roman Empire and had mined a greater and more enduring value spiritually as they planted the first church in Europe. Their humble beginnings, with a few ladies on the riverbank, had grown through the false accusations of the slave masters of a girl that Paul had delivered from her demon to include the jailer and his family who had been baptized with his family in the middle of the night after they had washed the stripes of Paul and Silas. Paul had exercised his citizenship and procured an apologetic escort, by the generals leading the city, out of prison in full view of the town, to exonerate the name of Christ and those proclaiming His truth and also to provide protection to Lydia and the infant church meeting in her home. As implied by the approximate thirty mile distances between the cities named as they traveled to Thessalonica, the Philippian church had probably provided horses for their journey to Thessalonica so that these missionaries would not have to carry their bags upon their swollen and lacerated backs in their hundred mile journey to the next capital. This spiritual seal team had sacrificed their bodies to bring them the gospel and they showed their gratitude by continual sacrifice with gifts to Paul to support his evangelistic efforts (Phil 4:16).

“WHEREAS BEING BEATEN AT PHILIPPOS, [PHILIPPI,] AND SCARCE ESCAPING OUT OF GREAT DANGER, HE PREACHETH CHRIST AT THESSALONICA, IT APPEARETH THEREBY HOW CORAGEOUS HE WAS TO KEEP THE COURSE OF HIS CALLING, AND HOW BOLD HE WAS EVER NOW AND THEN TO ENTER INTO NEW DANGERS.”
JOHN CALVIN

BIBLE STUDIES

THURSDAY @ 6:30 AM –PRAYER MEETING – GAB 3RD FLOOR, ROOM 300B

THURSDAY @ 7:00 AM –BIBLE STUDY – GAB 3RD FLOOR, ROOM 300B

Virginia

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I. GREAT COURAGE

ACTS 17:1

Paul had his eyes set on the next capital and all the potential that it had to influence those around it in every direction. Thessalonica, with its approximately 200,000 inhabitants, was a strategic city for numerous additional reasons: 1) Its nearby hot springs for which it was first called “Therma.” 2) As a free city, it enjoyed all the same privileges as Philippi, having fought on the side of the emperor in the same battle against Brutus and Cassius. 3) Geographically located where the traffic of the sea met the traffic of the land and the Egnatian Road, which connected Rome with the East, met the sea at this great city. 4) Two rivers, the Vardar and Vistritza provided transportation conduits for agricultural products from the fertile region above the city. 5) As one of the major seaports of the day, it ranked with Ephesus and Corinth with port traffic. 6) The city formed a natural amphitheatre as it sloped gently down toward the sea. 7) It had a modern Roman network of fresh water supply and drainage system. 8) A large percent of the population was Jewish. 9) As the capital city, it was also the largest city of Macedonia. Paul and Silas are still nursing their wounded backs, yet they courageously remain focused on giving the gospel, no matter the cost, in this strategic city.

“I PRESS TOWARD THE MARK FOR THE PRIZE OF THE HIGH CALLING OF GOD IN CHRIST JESUS.”

PHILIPPIANS 3:14

II. GREAT CONTENT

ACTS 17:2-3

Paul not only had a strategy concerning the cities he evangelized from his commission in Acts 9:15, but also he had a strategy described here as his “*custom*.” Was his “*custom*” a) to go to the synagogue (if there was one), b) to persuade from the Scriptures, c) to have a three Sabbath series, d) all of the above? From the close context, all three probably defined his evangelistic strategy on this second missionary journey because Luke

will reveal a departure from it in Athens and Corinth as Paul speaks to the Athenian philosophers on Mars Hill and waits for the rest of his mission team before completing his series in Corinth (Acts 18:4-5). There are three verbs that describe how Paul taught the Scriptures: The first points to persuasion through discussion and from this word we get our word “dialogue.” It was particularly used of one arguing his case before a court. His singular source was “*the Scriptures*” or the Old Testament to prove his case. Such required both “*explaining*” (meaning to open or interpret) and “*giving evidence*” to that which the Jews had overlooked: “*that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead.*” The Jews had only embraced the Scriptures that spoke of their Messiah’s/Christ’s exaltation as the greatest King, but they had completely ignored His suffering described in Psalm 2, 22 and Isaiah 53, as they do today. Neither had they considered the resurrection of their Messiah as described in Psalm 16:10-11. Paul is quoted in his climax, “*This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ.*”

“FOR IF I PREACH THE GOSPEL, I HAVE NOTHING TO BOAST OF, FOR NECESSITY IS LAID UPON ME; YES, WOE IS ME IF I DO NOT PREACH THE GOSPEL!” 1 CORINTHIANS 9:16

III. GREAT CONVERTS

ACTS 17:4

In addition to “*some*” of the Jews being persuaded and joining Paul and Silas was a “*great multitude of the God-fearing Greeks.*” The last time we saw a “*great multitude*” was Acts 14:1 in Iconium where about half the city had come to Christ! If this occasion is the same percentage, then there were about 100,000 people who “*turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God*” (1 Thess 1:9)! But not only were these converts great in number, many were great in their leadership in this capital, literally, “*the leading women not a few.*” Likely their husbands led the city and some were on Paul’s mission team (Acts 19:29, 20:4)!

Questions to Ponder:

- 1) Are you courageous to present the Gospel of Jesus Christ to those around you and even those above you?
- 2) Do you use the Scriptures to persuade, explain, and give evidence to the truth whenever you have opportunity?
- 3) Is your witness to others primarily focused on the suffering and death of Jesus Christ as well as His resurrection?