

When Paul and Silas arrived in Thessalonica, what did they discover (v. 1)? A local Jewish synagogue.

What did Paul do (vv. 2-3)? As was his custom, he went directly to the synagogue and he reasoned with the Jews from their Hebrew scriptures. He appealed to their intellect, explaining and proclaiming the Gospel message, i.e. the truth and reality of Jesus Christ.....His life, death and resurrection. Paul used the Old Testament scriptures to prove that Jesus was their Messiah.

How did the people react to Paul's teaching (v. 4)? The gospel message was received favorably by people of various nationalities and social positions.

But the Jews who were not persuaded....and were jealous.....what did they do (vv. 5-7)? They formed a mob and started a riot in the city. Jason was evidently Paul's host in Thessalonica, as Lydia had been in Philippi (16:15, 40). The Jewish adversaries charged Paul and Silas with revolutionary teaching, namely, that another king existed, i.e. Jesus. Since they could not find Paul and Silas, they dragged Jason and some other Christians before the city officials.

It was strange for the Jews to be so zealous in safeguarding the government of Caesar, since they had no love for the Roman Empire.

What happened when the crowd accused Paul and Silas of saying, "there is another King, one called Jesus" (vv. 8-9)? Chaos ensued. Since the city officials could not find Paul and Silas (v. 6) to bring them to trial, they made Jason and his friends pay a bond ("pledge") guaranteeing that Paul would cause no further trouble and would leave town. If trouble continued, Jason would lose his money. If it did not, he would receive it back. Paul and Silas then left town (v. 10).¹

When Paul and Silas arrived in Berea, where did they go (v.10)? To the local Jewish synagogue.

How did the Bereans compare to the Thessalonians (v. 11)? The Jews in Berea did not react out of jealousy like the Jews in Thessalonica did (v. 5) but listened carefully and considered what Paul preached. For several days they compared what Paul said to the teachings of their Hebrew Scriptures. Their example of daily Bible study has inspired Christians ever since to do the same. Anyone who listens to new religious truth would do well to compare it with Scripture, as these Jews did. Many of these noble skeptics believed because Paul's teaching was consistent with the Old Testament.²

How did the mixed crowd respond to Paul's teaching (v. 12)? Here, there seem to have been many Jewish converts rather than the few that usually resulted from Paul's preaching. Many Gentiles also believed. Among them were a number of prominent Greek (Gentile) women (v. 4) as well as Greek men.³

When the jealous, unbelieving Jews in Thessalonica heard that Paul was preaching the Gospel in Berea, what did they do (v. 13)? Hearing of Paul's presence in Berea, the Thessalonian Jews

followed him there. They evidently adopted the same tactics that they had used in Thessalonica, i.e. they agitated and stirred up the crowds against Paul in order to force him out of Berea (vv. 5, 8).

The truism throughout the Bible is this -- Anytime a work of God is going on, expect opposition in some form from Satan and his minions.

How did Paul, Silas and Timothy respond to this attack (vv. 14-15)? The Christians helped Paul escape to Athens while Silas and Timothy remained in Berea for a while.

What was Paul's reaction to being in Athens (v. 16)? While waiting for Silas and Timothy at Athens, Paul was deeply burdened by the idolatry of the city. Although Athens was the center of culture, education, and fine arts, Paul was interested in none of these things. He did not occupy his time with sightseeing trips.⁴

Confronted with all these idols, what was Paul's strategy (v. 17)? Paul ratcheted up his ministry to Jews and God-fearing Greeks in the synagogue, but he also discussed the Gospel with any who wanted to do so in the market place. These were probably not God-fearing Gentiles but simply pagan Gentiles.⁵

Who was the group that confronted Paul (v. 18a)? Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. Two of the greatest enemies the gospel has ever had to contend with are the two ruling principles of the Epicureans and Stoics—"Pleasure and Pride."⁶

Then the philosophers took Paul to stand in front of the Areopagus. Who were they? The Council of the Areopagus was a judicial body like a supreme court. They had authority over religion, morals, and educational matters in Athens.

What were the philosophers concerns (vv. 19-20)? The council wanted to know about Paul's new teaching, which was strange to their ears. In Athens, the ancient world's intellectual center, the Athenians and foreign residents loved to debate the latest ideas. This openness gave Paul an opportunity to preach his message.⁷

It was not exactly a trial, but simply a hearing in which Paul would be given an opportunity to set forth his "strange" teaching before the members of the court and the multitude. This is somewhat explained in verse 21.⁸

How were the men of the Areopagus described (v. 21)? The Athenians loved to stand around and talk and listen to others. They seemed to have an unlimited amount of time for this.⁹

¹ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Acts, 2022 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), 356.

² Ibid., 357.

³ Ibid.

⁴ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1638.

⁵ Dr. Thomas L. Constable, Notes on Acts, 2022 Edition (published by <http://planobiblechapel.org/soniclight/>), 360.

⁶ Ibid., 361.

⁷ Stanley D. Toussaint, "Acts," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 403.

⁸ William MacDonald, *Believer's Bible Commentary: Old and New Testaments*, ed. Arthur Farstad (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1995), 1638.

⁹ Ibid.