

# ACTS: Thessalonica

*Acts 17:1-9*

## Westward, Ho! (v. 1-4)

- Paul & co. travel 30 miles south and west along the Via Egnatia to Amphipolis, the capital of the first district of Macedonia
- Then they go 27 miles to Apollonia
- Finally, 35 miles to Thessalonica, the capital of both the second district & the whole province
- Paul makes a strategic choice by targeting Thessalonica
  - A seaport on the Thermaic Gulf, linking sea & land routes to the interior of Macedonia
  - It served as a center for the spread of the Gospel to the whole Balkan peninsula (see Rom 15:19; 1 Thess. 1:7-8)
- As usual, Paul goes to the synagogue to preach for 3 weeks in a row
  - Using the OT, he points out the prophetic texts that foretell how the Christ must suffer & rise from the dead
  - And shows that Jesus fulfilled this in his death & resurrection
- Some Jews & many Gentiles put their faith in Jesus

## The Power Struggle (v. 5-9)

- Jealousy leads some of the Jewish men to rile up the city
  - Much like in Philippi, though different motives
- When they can't find Paul & Silas, they drag out some new local converts, including a man named Jason
  - They are charged with public disturbance, harboring disturbers of the peace, & defying Caesar
- The charge of defying Caesar was based on the claim that Jesus is king
  - Other religions had concepts of God-kings, including Zeus
  - However, Paul's preaching on Jesus, the God-man, who would come again to be king would sound like a threat to the rule of the Emperor (1 Thess. 1:9-10; 2 Thess. 2:5-8)
- Jason gives bond money to the officials allowing for their release with the conditions:
  - No more public disturbances
  - Paul & Silas would leave the city
    - Which they do (v. 10)

## Who's the King?

- Ironically, the Jews who were led by a misguided zeal to protect the reputation & glory of God, undermined it by declaring allegiance to Caesar over Jesus
- Paul wasn't demanding that Christians disobey Caesar
  - In fact, he commanded them to (Rom. 13:1-7)
  - As did Peter (1 Pet. 2:13-17)
- Rather, we are to have our ultimate allegiance to king Jesus
  - God is our ultimate authority
  - Jesus is our eternal King

## So What?

- Is Jesus our ultimate authority & true King?
- How do we show this with our lives?

**Meditation Verse:** *John 18:37*