

Bible Study

Gods Word in Focus



Week Forty Nine

Acts of the Apostles

Acts 17:1-34

PAUL AND SILAS GO TO THESSALONICA

Paul, Silas and Timothy continued on the second missionary journey. As they departed Philippi, they traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, arriving at Thessalonica. Paul found the Jewish synagogue and for three Sabbaths "reasoned with them from the Scriptures". He taught them that Jesus had suffered and died, and then was raised from the dead. He proclaimed to them that Jesus was the Christ. Some Jews and a great multitude of Greeks believed and joined them.

TROUBLE IN THESSALONICA

The Jews, who did not believe, became envious of the success of the gospel of Christ. They set out to create a mob, and enraged them against Paul and Silas, but they could not find them. Thus, they took Jason and some of the brethren before the rulers of the city, claiming they had harbored these men who were "acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king - Jesus." This incited the crowd and the city rulers. They tried to depict Paul and Silas as revolutionaries against Caesar. The rulers then took security from Jason and the others, and released them.

MANY PEOPLE BECOME CHRISTIANS IN BEREIA

The brethren sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea (about 50 miles away). They went to the Jewish synagogue there and found the people to be receptive to the gospel. They were willing to study the Scriptures to determine the Truth. Many believed. When word got back to Thessalonica, Jews traveled there to stir up the city against them. The brethren sent Paul away to Athens. Silas and Timothy remained there. Paul requested that they quickly join him in Athens.

PAUL PREACHES IN ATHENS

Upon arrival in Athens, Paul's "spirit was provoked within him when he saw that the city was given over to idols." Again, he went to the synagogue to reason with the Jew and Gentile worshipers, daily. He also reasoned with others in the marketplace each day. This created an opportunity to speak with the philosophers (i.e., Epicureans, Stoics, and others). Some derided him, calling him a "babbler." Others thought he spoke of foreign gods. They invited him to speak in the Areopagus (also called Mar's Hill). This was the place of the supposed experts of philosophy and religion in Athens.

PAULS SPEECH TO THE AREOPAGUS

Paul spoke to them by finding common ground from which to launch into his gospel message. He keyed into the inscription: "TO THE UNKNOWN GOD." This is the One he proclaimed to them. Paul also referenced a saying of their own poets, "For we are also His offspring." He pointed out that since we were the offspring of God, He could not be made of gold or silver or stone by human artists. Paul then taught them of repentance and judgment. He indicated that Christ would be the judge and that He was raised from the dead. Some mocked Paul at this saying. Others wanted to hear more about this later. Some believed and joined him.