

## **The Gospel Comes to Thessalonica**

### **1. Paul's COURAGE in Preaching to the Thessalonians - 1 Th 2:2**

- A. Thessalonica: Just 100 miles down the Via Egnatia military highway from Philippi. Capital city, major seaport and most populous city of Macedonia. Like many Roman city it was given over to idols and immorality.
- B. Paul, along with Silas, has just been beaten and jailed as a result of his work in Philippi. He calls this "*spitefully treated*" - 2:2. He is not above feelings of humiliation and embarrassment. **Yet he is not intimidated into silence!**
- C. Paul goes straight to the synagogue - Ac 17:1-2a. The synagogue figuratively represents God's providence in (justly) scattering the Jews and thereby providing a platform for the universal kingdom to be established in His Son.

### **2. Paul's REASONING in Preaching to the Thessalonians - Ac 17:2-3**

- A. The approach: Paul reasoned, explained and demonstrated. These words describe mental industry and imply strenuous argumentation and debate. Paul's main thesis: "*This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ*" (Ac 17:3).
- B. People want to become Christians by shortcuts: they want Jesus or the Holy Spirit to speak to them directly; they want to follow their feelings, even when those feelings conflict with revelation.
- C. Sometimes we wish to accommodate the shallow, sensual cravings of man by appealing to their souls through food, entertainment and recreation. This also keeps us from having to **learn the Scriptures** and defend the truth by argumentation.

### **3. Paul's CHARACTER Among the Thessalonians - 1 Th 2:3-11**

#### **A. The *negatives*:**

- 1. Not in deceit, uncleanness, guile - 2:3.
- 2. Not as pleasing men, with flattery - 2:4-5a.
- 3. Not in covetousness or glorying in men - 2:5b-6.

#### **B. The *positives*:**

- 1. Gentle, affectionately longing, dear - as nursing mother toward child - 2:7-8.

2. Devoutly, justly, blamelessly - 2:10.

3. Exhorted, comforted, charged - as father does children - 2:11.

C. Paul **loved** the lost, who are not easily lovable and he *“became all things to all men that (he) might by all means save some”* (1 Cor 9:23).

**4. The Result: Some Believe, Some Reject - Ac 17:4, 5-9.** It will always be this way.

### ***Applications:***

1. It still takes courage, knowledge and character to effectively present the gospel. God places such power in earthen vessels *“that the excellence of the power may be of God and not of us”* (2 Cor 4:7).
2. But we earthen vessels can dim the light of the gospel by:
  - a. Discord, disharmony which robs us of enthusiasm, energy, desire to reach the lost.
  - b. Complacency, which is unmoved by the plight of lost people.
  - c. Despondency, which assumes no one is looking for truth or cares. In our discouragement we stop looking for the seekers.
  - d. Ignorance, which inhibits us from speaking to people because we lack confidence in our ability to defend the truth.
  - e. Distraction, for we are simply too wrapped up in our own affairs to be concerned with the Lord's.
3. A church was started in the most unlikely of places - Thessalonica. It shined brightly in its generation. We **can** still make a difference in this world by preaching the pure gospel of Christ. ***Are we up to the task??***