

K.E.Y. Bible Study

Description: K.E.Y. Bible Study introduces the essential biblical narratives, concepts, and themes, and teaches the student how to apply the message of the Bible to daily living. Each teaching session is self-contained, which allows participants to join in the study at any time during the five years.

Purpose: To teach the most significant events, passages, and doctrines of the Bible in a manner and using methods which encourages and empowers the student to:

- Keep the faith that we have received
- Be Equipped to serve the Body of Christ
- Become Yoked, or connect, with others for the purpose of ministry

Founding of the Church at Thessalonica and Overview of I and II Thessalonians **February 10, 2016** **Acts 17:1-15**

General Background

Upon leaving Philippi, Paul and the team continued their missionary journey by travelling the great Roman road, the Egnatian Way, 100 miles to the city of Thessalonica. Thessalonica was the capital of this region of Macedonia. It was a wealthy and influential city and ranked in importance with Antioch in Syria and Caesarea in Palestine. If the gospel could take root in this important center, it could spread throughout the region. When Paul left Thessalonica, he and Silas went to Berea, a city about forty miles from Thessalonica, where he found a more receptive audience

What Happened

Thessalonica—Resisting the Word (Acts 17:1-9)

Acts 17:1 - When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a Jewish synagogue.

One reason Paul did not stop for any length of time in any other city along the way was in part due to the fact that those cities did not have a Jewish synagogue. Thessalonica did.

Acts 17:2-3 - As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures, explaining and proving that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead. "This Jesus I am proclaiming to you is the Christ," he said.

Paul labored as a tentmaker in this city (Acts 18:3; 1 Thes 2:9; 2 Thes 3:7-10) during the week and reasoned in the synagogue for three Sabbaths. After these initial weeks, he had to minister outside the synagogue. We do not know how long Paul stayed in the city, but it was long enough to have received financial help twice from the church in Philippi. (Phil 4:15-16).

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Paul appealed to prophecies of the Old Testament to form his gospel presentation. Notice Paul's approach:

1. *He reasoned* – he dialogued
2. *He explained* – opened the Scriptures
3. *He proved* – to present the evidence
4. *He proclaimed* – to preach
 - a. Christ died
 - b. Christ arose from the dead
 - c. Jesus is the Christ

Acts 17:4 - Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.

His ministry here was not long, but it was effective. This was the first city where Paul's teachings reached a large number of socially prominent citizens. Two of these new converts were Aristarchus and Secundus who later traveled with Paul (Acts 20:4)

Acts 17:5 - But the Jews were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas in order to bring them out to the crowd.

Unable to refute Paul's preaching theologically, and spurred by base motives, they attempted to destroy him physically. They recruited thugs to help with the matter.

Acts 17:6-9 - But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other brothers before the city officials, shouting: "These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar's decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus." When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil. Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.

Although the city was organized as a free city, mob rule seemed to have the day. "The world" means the Roman Empire. The charge was much more than a theological difference; it was treason. The city officials did their best, as Pilate had tried, to wash their hands of this matter and obtained security from Jason that Paul and Silas would cease their activity in the city and most likely that he would no longer house them.

Berea—Receiving the Word (Acts 17:10-15)

Acts 17:10a - As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea.

Under the cover of night, Paul and Silas left Thessalonica and went to Berea, nearby but outside the jurisdiction of Thessalonica.

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Acts 17:10b-12 - On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.

Again, Paul followed his method of going to the synagogue first. Here he found a crowd that investigated what Paul was saying theologically instead of reacting to him. God spoke through His word and many believed. Noble people do not dismiss the gospel out of hand, nor do they just accept it without first examining it. God's word is deep and there is no end to the study of it.

The church was being formed consisting of Jewish believers as well as Gentile. No wall of separation.

Acts 17:13 - When the Jews in Thessalonica learned that Paul was preaching the word of God at Berea, they went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up.

Satan also has missionaries and they are busy.

Acts 17:14-15 - The brothers immediately sent Paul to the coast, but Silas and Timothy stayed at Berea. The men who escorted Paul brought him to Athens and then left with instructions for Silas and Timothy to join him as soon as possible.

The providential hand of God moved Paul on to other fields.

What Does It Mean and How Can I Apply It?

1. The scriptural message that Jesus is the Christ is still the gospel we are to proclaim.
2. God works despite circumstances to accomplish His divine plan.
3. Studying Scripture involves great effort and diligence. We must constantly fill our hearts and minds with God's word so that we can recognize truth and discern error.
4. When Christianity goes into action, it causes a revolution in the life of individuals and in society as a whole.