

a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, wellpleasing to God. 19 But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus. 20 Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The Establishment of the church at Thessalonica

ACTS 17:1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews: 2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, 3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.

As we start the 17th chapter of ACTS we find the Apostle Paul again on the move in this his second missionary journey that was sponsored in part by the church at Antioch, Syria. Paul once again is traveling with Silas, having left Timothy and Luke behind at Philippi to continue the work he had begun there. In ACTS 17:1 we find mention of Amphipolis and Apollonia, which were probably overnight stops of Paul and Silas as they traveled west from Philippi toward Thessalonica. Both Amphipolis and Apollonia are ancient cities of Macedonia. Amphipolis means: "a city surrounded by the sea." Amphipolis was located on the east bank of the Strymon River, and was famous for commanding a bridge over the Strymon River, which connected northern Greece unto the sea, and became an important depot for the mining industry, as well as the timber industry that was closely connected with the shipbuilding trade. Apollonia, Macedonia was located about half way between Amphipolis and Thessalonica. Apollonia means: "utter destruction." According to the research of Conybeare and Howson the distance from Philippi to Amphipolis was 33 miles; Amphipolis to Apollonia was 30 miles, and the distance from Apollonia to Thessalonica was 37 miles. This means that the total distance from Philippi to Thessalonica was about a hundred miles by the route they took. If Paul and Silas traveled each of these distances in one day it would mean a couple of things. First that Paul and Silas were in good shape, and second, in order for them to be in such good shape the Lord would of had to come in for them and heal them from the severe beatings they had received at Philippi just days before.

So now in ACTS 17:1 we find Paul and Silas coming into Thessalonica. Thessalonica means: "victory over the tossing of law, or falsity." Any full overcomer must have this kind of victory. Brother Copley also notes that "such a victory is required to become an overcoming assembly as the Saints in Thessalonica grew to be." We find Thessalonica or the sister term Thessalonians in nine scriptures. Paul's first two epistles were written to the church of the Thessalonians, thus we get a little better idea of the kind of Saints that Paul established there, which was overcoming type Saints, who were instructed to look of the soon coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Note in ACTS 17:1 mention is made as to there being a synagogue of the Jews at Thessalonica. This gives us a little better idea of the size, and make up of the city. We did not find a synagogue of the Jews in Philippi, for no doubt it was a much smaller town. Thessalonica was the largest city in Northern Macedonia, and is located on the Aegean Sea in the Gulf of Thermai. Thessalonica was on a northern trade route that went from Rome eastward. Conybeare and Howson further note that Thessalonica was the most populous town of Macedonia. It was large enough to have a synagogue of the Jews there, showing us further that Thessalonica had a substantial population of Jews in it.

Acts 17:2 note that Paul had a certain manner about him, a certain thing that he did in every city he came to. This certain thing Paul did in every city he came to was to find out if they had a synagogue, and if they did, he made sure he attended the sabbath day services at these synagogues. We have found this true in tracing his life up to now. Back in ACTS 9:20 after being saved we find Paul preaching for the first time at a synagogue in Damascus. ACTS 9:20 reads: *And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues, that he is the Son of God.* This was always Paul's opening theme in every synagogue we find him preaching. In ACTS 13:5 when Paul and Barnabas started their missionary journey we find them arriving at the city of Salamis, and ACTS 13:5 reads: *And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews:...* A few weeks later Paul and Barnabas ...came to Antioch in Pisidia, and went into

the synagogue on the sabbath day, and sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Ye men and brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on. {ACTS 13:14 & 15}. We covered the sermon that Paul preached that first sabbath day in Antioch in Pisidia when we went over the scriptures of ACTS 13:14-43. {Review pages 134-201 of these notes}. Luke records that sermon for us because it was like a pattern sermon, or a typical sermon that Paul used in every Synagogue he first preach in. Again in ACTS 14:1 we find Paul preaching a sermon at a synagogue in Iconium. One of the results of Paul's preaching at these various synagogues was that many got saved, and a door was then opened for Paul to preach unto the Gentiles of these same cities also. This is why Luke writes in ACTS 17:2 *And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures,...*

The word "reasoned" is also translated speak, preached, preaching, disputing, and reasoned. The word "reasoned" as used here in verse 2 means that Paul was drawing his arguments from the scriptures.

For Paul to get to speak for three weeks at the synagogue at Thessalonica showed that they had many there with open hearts to receive the word of God. ACTS 17:2 *And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, 3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.* One of the key words in this portion of scripture is the word "opening" found in verse 3. The Greek word translated "opening" here is dianoigo {dee-an-oy'-go} number 1272 in the Strong's Greek Concordance. It is found eight times in The New Testament. Eight again is a number that has several meanings, one of which is NEW BIRTH, and that exactly is the thought that Paul is trying to express first here at Thessalonica, the idea of the NEW BIRTH. I like the way the Holy Ghost progresses in New Testament scripture with the usage of this word dianoigo {dee-an-oy'-go} number 1272 in the Strong's Greek Concordance.

We first find this word dianoigo used twice in the following portion of scripture from MARK 7. MARK 7:32 *And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him. 33 And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue; 34 And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened. 35 And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain. 36 And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published it; 37 And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.* In this text we find dianoigo meaning to open the ears.

In LUKE 24 after Jesus resurrection we find Him appearing unto two disciples walking on the road to Emmaus. Jesus had a nice long talk with them, and starting in LUKE 24:27 we read: *And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. 28 And they drew nigh unto the village, whither they went: and he made as though he would have gone further. 29 But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us; for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. 30 And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. 31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. 32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?* In this text we find that dianoigo {dee-an-oy'-go} number 1272 in the Strong's Greek Concordance means inverse 31 that their eyes were first opened, and then in verse 32 their hearts were opened to receive the scriptures.

Later in LUKE 24 we see the same thing again, that is hearts opened to receive the scriptures. In this portion Jesus is speaking unto His disciples. LUKE 24:44 *And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me. 45 Then opened he their understanding, that they*

might understand the scriptures, 46 And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 And ye are witnesses of these things. 49 And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high.

The next time we see this Greek word *dianoigo* {dee-an-oy'-go} number 1272 in the Strong's Greek Concordance used in scripture is in ACTS 16:14, which reads: And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. This scripture plainly tells us that Lydia's heart was opened to receive the scriptures, and the word of God spoken by Paul, and we know she became the backbone of the assembly there at Philippi.

Now here for the last time in the New Testament we find this Greek word *dianoigo* {dee-an-oy'-go} number 1272 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, translated opening in ACTS 17:3. ACTS 17:2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, 3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. We can now see that those of Thessalonica first had their ears opened to receive Paul's words. Then their eyes were also opened to see that these things Paul spoke were indeed true. And finally the hearts of many there at Thessalonica were opened and gladly received Paul's gospel message.

The word "alleging" found in ACTS 17:3 is number 3908 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, and means: to set forth before someone, or to explain one's self in teaching, such as setting forth before an assembly in teaching, as the Apostle Paul was doing here in Thessalonica. We find that the Apostle Paul was setting forth thoughts unto the Thessalonians from the scriptures that they were also familiar with.

So what we have shown so far in verses 2 & 3 is that Paul has made his point or argument by opening up the scriptures before these Thessalonians, allowing the Holy Ghost to first get their ears open to hear what he has to say, and then their eyes open unto the truth that is in the gospel, so that with open hearts they can receive the good news that Paul preached. And Paul did all of this as a master chef would present a dinner for all of his guests to enjoy.

Having looked briefly at the three words "reasoned," "opening," and "alleging" found in ACTS 17:2 & 3, let's now consider the scriptures referenced in this text: ACTS 17:2 And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, 3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. The scriptures Paul had in his day were Old Testament scriptures, collectively referred to as "the law" (books written by Moses), "the prophets," and "the psalms."

Early on in this study we learned that a typical Jewish synagogue sabbath day service consisted in part of the reading of the law and the prophets. {Study LUKE 4:16-20; ACTS 13:27 and ACTS 15:21 for starters}. Matthew Henry's Commentary states that in the synagogues they had seven readers every sabbath, the first a priest, the second a Levite, and the other five Israelites of that synagogue. The first order of the service was ...the reading of the law and the prophets.... This was a very important part of a Jewish worship service as copies of the Scripture were in that day very rare. The reading of the law and the reading of the prophets was divided each Sabbath day service so as to be read over entirely once every year. This would mean that on each Sabbath day two portions of scripture would be read, in course, one from the five books of Moses (the law), and one from the other books of the Old Testament (the prophets). The PSALMS were also incorporated into each of these services, probably as songs. By the time Paul was sent to Jerusalem from Tarsus as a youth to be taught by one of the greatest teachers of the law named Gamaliel, Paul would have heard the Old Testament scriptures read over as many times as years he was old. {See again page 8, and 129 of these notes}. By the time Paul got saved on the road to Damascus there was probably not another man around who knew The Old Testament scripture in his head better than Paul. But it took a revelation of Jesus Christ Himself to reveal unto Paul's heart the truths concerning Jesus that were

hidden right in plain sight (so to speak) in these same Old Testament Scriptures. {Study GALATIANS 1:11-12}.

In Sunday School lessons past we have pointed out how that Jesus, when he began His ministry at Nazareth where he was brought up, read from Old Testament scripture things concerning Himself. We find this in LUKE 4. LUKE 4:16 *And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read. 17 And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 18 The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, 19 To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. 20 And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.* This event was outstanding to the hearers, for they remembered it years later when they told it to Luke, who put it in writing for our learning. We find in this portion of LUKE that Jesus kept His reading short and simple, in fact He only covered one and a half verses from ISAIAH 61. Why did Jesus choose this particular portion of scripture to read here at Nazareth? Because it gives a brief capsule of Him, and His whole mission here on earth. Jesus wanted to reveal Himself to those whom He grew up with there at Nazareth, so he reads the scripture from ISAIAH 61:1 *The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; 2 To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD,...* After Jesus read this portion of Old Testament scripture from the Prophet ISAIAH we read this starting in LUKE 4:20 *And he closed the book, and he gave it again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him. 21 And he began to say unto them, This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears. 22 And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth.* Thus Jesus began His ministry pointing out who He was from Old Testament scripture, and He continued to do so His whole time on earth. After His resurrection on the road to Emmaus in LUKE 24 Jesus expounded unto Cleopas and his friend the scriptures concerning Himself, as noted like this in LUKE 24:27: *And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.* Later that same day Jesus appeared unto the eleven and LUKE 24:44 tells us: *And he said unto them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.* So we see that all through out Jesus time here on earth He was fulfilling scripture, and quoting scripture, and, again this was Old Testament scripture, which was read every sabbath day in the Jewish synagogues, things that *...were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms....* *...in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.* The two on the road to Emmaus proclaimed in LUKE 24:32 *And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?* The reason for this was is that these very familiar scriptures Jesus expounded unto them were now made plain in their sight, and their eyes were enlightened, and they saw for the first time that it really was Jesus who was being spoken of in these Old Testament scriptures. This is exactly the very same thing Paul was doing in these Jewish synagogues everywhere he went, that is opening up unto the hearers the Old Testament scripture the things concerning Jesus! ACTS 17:2 *And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, 3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.*

As I was thinking about this I wondered what were the scriptures Paul was using, and where could one read in the Old Testament and see Jesus spoken of. Then I was reminded of the story Brother Hill used to tell of the little boy who was picking up rocks, and looking under them when a man asked him what he was looking for? The little boy told the man he was looking for God. The man told the boy he would give him \$5.00 if he

could tell him where God was. The little boy looked at the man and said that he would give the man \$5.00 if he could tell him where God wasn't, for everywhere the little boy looked he could see God, and his marvelous creation. And so it was with the Apostle Paul after his eyes were enlightened by Jesus, it got to the point that every time he looked in Old Testament scripture he saw Jesus everywhere he looked, whether it be in studying the law of Moses, or in studying the Prophets, or in studying the Psalms.

To help further illustrate this very same point I want to go to three portions of Old Testament scripture, and see things that ...were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms.... ...in all the scriptures the things concerning (Jesus) himself.

First let's read from DEUTERONOMY 32 written by Moses. The first 43 verses of DEUTERONOMY 32 is in the form of a song, which puts forth part of Moses last words, and speaks of the mercy and truth of God, which we know was manifest in the life of Jesus when He came to earth full of grace and truth. As we go through this look for the capitalized word "Rock" in this portion, and there see Jesus. DEUTERONOMY 32:1 Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth. 2 My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass: 3 Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye greatness unto our God. 4 He is the Rock, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he. 5 They have corrupted themselves, their spot is not the spot of his children: they are a perverse and crooked generation. 6 Do ye thus requite the LORD, O foolish people and unwise? is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath he not made thee, and established thee? 7 Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations: ask thy father, and he will shew thee; thy elders, and they will tell thee. 8 When the most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel. 9 For the LORD'S portion is his people; Jacob is the lot of his inheritance. 10 He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; he led him about, he instructed him, he kept him as the apple of his eye. 11 As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings: 12 So the LORD alone did lead him, and there was no strange god with him. 13 He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and he made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock: 14 Butter of kine, and milk of sheep, with fat of lambs, and rams of the breed of Bashan, and goats, with the fat of kidneys of wheat; and thou didst drink the pure blood of the grape. 15 But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness; then he forsook God which made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation. 16 They provoked him to jealousy with strange gods, with abominations provoked they him to anger. 17 They sacrificed unto devils, not to God; to gods whom they knew not, to new gods that came newly up, whom your fathers feared not. 18 Of the Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee. 19 And when the LORD saw it, he abhorred them, because of the provoking of his sons, and of his daughters. 20 And he said, I will hide my face from them, I will see what their end shall be: for they are a very froward generation, children in whom is no faith. 21 They have moved me to jealousy with that which is not God; they have provoked me to anger with their vanities: and I will move them to jealousy with those which are not a people; I will provoke them to anger with a foolish nation. 22 For a fire is kindled in mine anger, and shall burn unto the lowest hell, and shall consume the earth with her increase, and set on fire the foundations of the mountains. 23 I will heap mischiefs upon them; I will spend mine arrows upon them. 24 They shall be burnt with hunger, and devoured with burning heat, and with bitter destruction: I will also send the teeth of beasts upon them, with the poison of serpents of the dust. 25 The sword without, and terror within, shall destroy both the young man and the virgin, the suckling also with the man of gray hairs. 26 I said, I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them to cease from among men: 27 Were it not that I feared the wrath of the enemy, lest their adversaries should behave themselves strangely, and lest they should say, Our hand is high, and the LORD hath not done all

this. 28 For they are a nation void of counsel, neither is there any understanding in them. 29 C that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end! 30 How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the LORD had shut them up? 31 For their rock is not as our Rock, even our enemies themselves being judges. 32 For their vine is of the vine of Sodom, and of the fields of Gomorrah: their grapes are grapes of gall, their clusters are bitter: 33 Their wine is the poison of dragons, and the cruel venom of asps. 34 Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my treasures? 35 To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence; their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste. 36 For the LORD shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone, and there is none shut up, or left. 37 And he shall say, Where are their gods, their rock in whom they trusted, 38 Which did eat the fat of their sacrifices, and drank the wine of their drink offerings? let them rise up and help you, and be your protection. 39 See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me: I kill, and I make alive; I wound, and I heal: neither is there any that can deliver out of my hand. 40 For I lift up my hand to heaven, and say, I live for ever. 41 If I whet my glittering sword, and mine hand take hold on judgment; I will render vengeance to mine enemies, and will reward them that hate me. 42 I will make mine arrows drunk with blood, and my sword shall devour flesh; and that with the blood of the slain and of the captives, from the beginning of revenges upon the enemy. 43 Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries, and will be merciful unto his land, and to his people.

Five (GRACE) times in the above song of Moses we find the word Rock. This Rock is Jesus. And Paul specifically points this out for us in 1 CORINTHIANS 10. 1 CORINTHIANS 10:1 Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; 2 And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; 3 And did all eat the same spiritual meat; 4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ. Note how that Paul showed that Christ was not only the Rock, but that Christ was represented in the water they drank and the meat they ate. In other words it is hard to read about the children of Israel in their wanderings in the desert, and not see Jesus represented in one form or another, whether it be by a cloud by day to keep them cool, or a pillar of fire by night to keep them warm. EXODUS 13:21 And the LORD went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night: 22 He took not away the pillar of the cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people. In other words Jesus was always with them, just like Jesus is always with the believer, overshadowing him no matter where he goes.

In our second example of Old Testament scriptures that point to Christ, let's turn to one of the Prophets, Isaiah. ISAIAH 53:1 Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? 2 For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. 3 He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. 4 Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. 5 But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. 6 All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. 7 He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. 8 He was taken from prison and from judgment: and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of my people was he stricken. 9 And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. 10 Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his

days, and the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. 11 He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. 12 Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors.

If this portion of scripture isn't a portrait of our precious Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, then who does it refer too? It can refer to none other than Jesus Christ. Paul quotes from ISAIAH 53:1 in ROMANS 10:16, where we read: *...For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?* Paul also quotes from other portions of ISAIAH in many other places, such as: ACTS 28:25; ROMANS 9:27; ROMANS 10:20; and ROMANS 15:12 just to mention a few.

Our third example of Old Testament scripture that points to Christ takes us to the PSALMS where many references are made to Jesus. Let me just point out a few of these verses from PSALMS that Paul himself made reference too. In ACTS 13:33 Paul in his sermon to those at the synagogue in Antioch, Pisidia makes reference to PSALMS 2:7 when he states: *God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee.* In that same sermon a couple of verses later Paul quotes from PSALMS 16:10 when he states in ACTS 13:35 *Wherefore he saith also in another psalm, Thou shalt not suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.* Paul makes reference to PSALMS 44:22 in ROMANS 8:36 when he talks about the love of Christ in the following verses from ROMANS 8. ROMANS 8:35 *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? 36 As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. 37 Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. 38 For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, 39 Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.* Paul references Jesus Christ when he quotes from PSALMS 118:22 in ROMANS 9:33 *As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.* In EPHESIANS 1:22 Paul writes this statement made of Jesus Christ: *And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church,....* Here Paul quotes from PSALMS 8:6 and PSALMS 110:1. One final example of Paul referencing Jesus in his quoting from PSALMS. This is example comes from Paul's last letter to Timothy. 2 TIMOTHY 4:17 *Notwithstanding the Lord stood with me, and strengthened me; that by me the preaching might be fully known, and that all the Gentiles might hear: and I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.* Here Paul is referencing PSALMS 22:1 and 21. In total Paul makes reference to the PSALMS over sixty times in his writings, and many of these PSALMS he references point to Jesus Christ specifically.

What I have tried to do in this portion of our lesson is to show how Jesus Christ is referenced in so many different places in Old Testament scripture, whether it be from Moses, or the Prophets, or the Psalms, thus showing a little better how Paul could do what he did there at Thessalonica, which was as we read in ACTS 17:2 & 3. ACTS 17:2 *And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, 3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.*

If you want to study for yourself some more Old Testament scriptures that specifically reference Jesus, here is a short list of some of the Old Testament scriptures that were written of Jesus taken from Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms: GENESIS 3:15; 49:10; NUMBERS 21:8 & 9; DEUTERONOMY 18:15; PSALMS 2:12; 3:8; 22 - 24; 46:10; 69:8 & 9, 18-21; 103:3-5; ISAIAH 7:14; 9:6; 50:6; all of 53; EZEKIEL 34:23; and MALACHI 4:2-6. {Review again page 179 of these notes}.

There were three points that Paul was making in his presentation before this assembly at Thessalonica, which were the same three main points he made everywhere he first preached in synagogues. First, there were things written in the law of Moses, and the prophets, and the psalms that predicted a suffering Messiah. Second, after His

death this Messiah was to rise again. And third, Jesus Christ of Nazareth that was crucified, was indeed the Messiah that suffered and died, and rose again on the third day! This is the essence of what is stated in ACTS 17:2 & 3: *And Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures, 3 Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ.* In 1 CORINTHIANS 15 Paul writes nearly the same thing stating in verse 3 & 4: *For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; 4 And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:...* . Scripture doesn't tell us, but it may very well be that Paul spent these three Sabbath days at Thessalonica emphasizing these three points one at a time, kind of like a three part sermon. I am sure Paul briefly covered each of these three points in all of his sermons there at Thessalonica, but may have spent more time on one point each Sabbath until he had covered sufficiently each point thoroughly.

The very fact that Paul was allowed to speak three Sabbath's in a row shows us that there was a great deal of interest in his message there at Thessalonica. Many places before Paul had got thrown out after one Sabbath. ACTS 17:4 confirms this interest here at Thessalonica. ACTS 17:4 *And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.* What an unusually worded sentence this is, however the main message of this sentence is that "some of them believed," and we certainly thank God for that, for we too are beneficiaries of their belief in that later Paul wrote them two epistles from which we have also benefited much. There also is a great deal of other very important information conveyed in this sentence showing the positive response to Paul's message at Thessalonica.

We begin to understand this sentence of verse 4 a little better by first understanding the meaning of the word "consorted" that is used here. This is the only time we find this word "consorted" in scripture, both in Greek, and in English. As used here the word "consorted" means: "they joined themselves to," or "they threw in their lot with." In other words we could say it like this: When Paul and Silas came to Thessalonica and preached from the scriptures about Jesus Christ, there were those that believed what they were hearing was the truth from the word of God, and they cast in their lot with, and joined themselves to Paul and Silas much like the disciples joined themselves unto Jesus. The Apostle Paul writes it like this in 1 THESSALONIANS 2:12 *For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.* Thus we see that it was the word of God that caused some here at Thessalonica to choose to follow the doctrines and teachings of the Apostle Paul. However, as always is the case, not all would believe Paul, thus there is a separation between individuals that takes place because of the word of God. Some consorted with Paul, and some did not. Stated another way, some cast in their lot with Paul, and some did not. Paul explains it like this in HEBREWS 4:12 *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*

Let's consider another thought about this word "consorted." One author notes that the word "consorted" is commonly applied to those who are partakers of an inheritance. Thus we see that the believers at Thessalonica were latching on to the things spoken by Paul as being a part of those who would receive an eternal inheritance. And, of course, we know that the Apostle Paul also taught such doctrine, in fact Jesus Christ Himself told Paul on the road to Damascus that teaching about this inheritance that we have in Christ Jesus would be one of his main themes. We find this in ACTS 26:16-18, which again reads: *But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; 17 Delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, 18 To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them*

which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Let's look at some scriptures that shows how Paul taught this doctrine of inheritance. One such example is found in ACTS 20:32 where Paul states: *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.* Note again that it is the word of God, the word of His grace which worketh also in you that believe, that is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which believe. Certainly even after three weeks of services these precious believers in Thessalonica were latching onto Paul's doctrine. When Paul spoke the words recorded in ACTS 20:32 he was speaking to the Ephesian elders, with whom he had already spent much time. Later he would write them the epistle unto the EPHESIANS, and again emphasize facts concerning their, and our eternal inheritance. We turn to EPHESIANS 1 and pick up our reading concerning some of the things Christ Jesus purchased for us with His own precious blood there on the cross of Calvary. EPHESIANS 1:11 *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: 12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. 13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, 14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.* Paul knew that not all believers would understand, or be able at first to latch on to such wonderful doctrines, so he writes out a prayer of his, also found in EPHESIANS 1, and there in states: 17 *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: 18 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, 19 And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power, 20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,....* To the COLOSSIANS Paul writes out another prayer of his, and states starting in COLOSSIANS 1:9 *For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; 11 Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness; 12 Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light: 13 Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: 14 In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins:....*

Let me quote something here about inheritance from Brother Copley found in his study book of ACTS. "There is an inheritance for believers. Salvation from sin is not the inheritance. Salvation is God's free gift to undeserving, guilty men, when they repent, and believe the Gospel. A rich young ruler came to Jesus, thinking to inherit eternal life by doing something -- LUKE 18. The Lord showed him at once what he would have to do, if he would gain it by his own works. He was very sorrowful; for he was very rich. He would not trade his wealth for the lasting riches of eternal life. No, he would not if he could -- "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God" -- 1 CORINTHIANS 2:14. He could not if he would -- "for by grace are ye saved thru faith; not of works, lest any man should boast" -- EPHESIANS 2:8 & 9. Jesus proceeded to show him and the disciples that salvation is not obtained by inheritance, but by faith in Himself, the world's Sin-bearer. By faith in Jesus we become children of God (JOHN 1:12 & 13); "and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together" -- ROMANS 8:17. Children justly inherit, or fall heir to, their parents' riches. Likewise God's children are His rightful inheritors. But parents divide their possessions to their children usually upon certain deserving conditions, as good behavior etc. Likewise God's children will come into the divine inheritance upon certain prescribed scriptural conditions. Sinners are saved by faith upon the merit of Christ, because of His death in their behalf; but believers will

obtain an inheritance because of their own merit, by divine enabling, of course. If this is not the truth, why Paul's exhortation to give heed to the Word of grace? (ACTS 20:32). If eternal life is the inheritance; if believers shall all obtain an inheritance by the fact only of their being saved, there is no meaning to the Apostles words here. Observe closely that the joint heirship with Christ hereafter, depends upon joint heirship with Him here. Being glorified together with Jesus, depends upon our suffering and groaning in fellowship with Him on earth. ROMANS 8:17-39 teaches that, or nothing at all. Study also 2 TIMOTHY 2:9-14."

"Let no Christian worker imagine that he will inherit alike with others, and be rewarded on a par with others, no matter how he lives, or labors, or what he teaches. Let no believer think that he can live after the flesh, and expect an inheritance and a reward after the Spirit. Impossible! Unreasonable! Unjust! Unscriptural! Children cannot remain dwarfs and receive and inheritance. They would not appreciate and enjoy it, if they did receive it. Just so it is in the spiritual. Neither can dwarfs be of much use in service; therefore, for them there is little reward. "Be not deceived. God is not mocked. Whatsoever any man soweth, that shall he also reap." (GALATIANS 6:7.)

"So what is the inheritance someone may ask. REVELATION 21:7 answers the question in a comprehensive way, giving also the chief condition upon which the inheritance is obtained. REVELATION 21:7 *He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.* There is a present inheritance for those who are born again. All that the death of Christ has purchased, as for example, divine healing for the body and the anointing with the Spirit. The latter is the earnest of our inheritance in its fulness --EPHESIANS 1:14. Through faith and patience, saints inherit the promises -- HEBREWS 6:12. Now if you wish to know what is the full inheritance of the Church, study Paul's epistles. If you would know the rewards of the saints, study also the seven letters to the seven churches in Asia --REVELATION 2 and 3. In those various writings, we learn also upon what conditions both will be obtained." (End of quote from Brother Copley.)

So we note back in ACTS 17:4 that some of these Thessalonians threw in their lot with Paul believing that what he was preaching was indeed the truth, for Paul was preaching the word of God, and they began reaching out by faith to receive their eternal inheritance. What they were latching onto was the word of God, for themselves. From 1 and 2 THESSALONIANS let's look at some scriptures that further emphasize Paul's encouragement to the Thessalonians to pursue the word of God. 1 THESSALONIANS 1:8 *For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing.* 1 THESSALONIANS 2:13 *For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.* 1 THESSALONIANS 4:15 *For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep.* 2 THESSALONIANS 3:1 *Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you:...*

So far we have really only covered the first part of ACTS 17:4. The second part of ACTS 17:4 tells us the majority that believed Paul and Silas at Thessalonica were Gentiles. ACTS 17:4 *And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.* Like I said earlier this is an unusually worded sentence, especially the second half of this sentence. Putting both halves of this sentence together we see in the first part of the sentence that the "some of them" makes reference to the Jews, and "the devout Greeks," and "the chief women" in the second part of the sentence makes reference to the Gentiles who attended these Sabbath day services. Obviously these Sabbath day services at the Jewish Synagogues were not closed services for the Jews only, for Gentiles who were proselytes or converts to the Jewish religion were in attendance in great abundance. I think we all know that the Jews are for the most part good businessmen. As part of their doing business in a Roman society they would have to allow the Gentiles to attend their synagogue services. This made good business sense to them. That is why we find so many devout Greeks, and chief women in attendance here, and really in every city

where there was a Jewish synagogue. The chief women for the most part would be married to the chief men of the city, and the chief men of the city were the principle ones who had the money and influence in that town. These were the people the Jews did business with, and wanted to do more business with. Thus we find here a "great multitude" of influential Greeks in attendance at these Jewish synagogue services.

The second part of ACTS 17:4 informs us that the majority of believers in Paul's gospel there at Thessalonica were the gentiles; *...the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.* The word "devout" comes from a Greek word *sebomai* {seb'-om-ahee} (number 4576 in the Strong's Greek Concordance) that means: to feel awe, whether before God or man, to revere, and to worship. It is the same word translated "worshipped" in ACTS 16:14 where we read of Lydia worshipping God there at Philippi. In ACTS 18:13 we find Luke once again using this same Greek word to describe the preaching of the Apostle Paul, where he writes: *Saying, This fellow persuadeth men to worship God...* In total Luke uses this Greek word *sebomai* {seb'-om-ahee} (number 4576 in the Strong's Greek Concordance) eight times in the book of ACTS, which is fitting, for the number eight again has these five meanings: NEW CREATION; NEW BIRTH; NEW BEGINNING; RESURRECTION; and BRIDE. Certainly Paul taught all five of these doctrines to these new Thessalonian believers as he continued to persuade them to worship God.

Back here again in ACTS 17:4 at Thessalonica, like at Philippi, we find the tender hearts of many women opened to receive the word of God. And these were influential women too, noted here in verse 4 as chief women. These chief influential women persuaded their influential husbands to pay attention to what Paul said. We also have in Paul's own words a record of what he taught these "devout Greeks," and "chief women. This record is found in 1 THESSALONIANS.

1 THESSALONIANS 1:2 *We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers; 3 Remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father; 4 Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God. 5 For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. 6 And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost: 7 So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia. 8 For from you sounded out the word of the Lord not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad; so that we need not to speak any thing. 9 For they themselves shew of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; 10 And to wait for his Son from heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.* (Brother Hill made a note in his Bible here that the "wrath to come" was not the wrath of hell, but rather the wrath of the tribulation).

1 THESSALONIANS 2:1 *For yourselves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain: 2 But even after that we had suffered before, and were shamefully entreated, as ye know, at Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention. 3 For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: 4 But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. 5 For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloke of covetousness; God is witness: 6 Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. 7 But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children; (Remember that Rebecca, a type of the Bride of Christ, had a nurse named Deborah who stayed with her throughout her life, see GENESIS 24:59 & 35:8. We too have the Apostle Paul and his doctrines, which we are to follow throughout our life, *...even as a nurse cherisheth her children.*) 8 So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. 9 For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God. 10 Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily and justly and unblameably we behaved ourselves*

among you that believe: 11 As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children, 12 That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory. 13 For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.

Perhaps you may have noted in the above portion of scripture we just read from 1 THESSALONIANS the words and phrases Paul used that would especially grab the attention of the women readers of this epistle, which would have been in great part "the chief women not a few." Words and phrases such as ...we were gentle among you..., and ...as a nurse cherisheth her children..., and ...being affectionately desirous of you..., and a phrase all mothers could relate to: ...labour and travail. Again, like at Philippi, it may have been the tender hearts of the women who first received Paul's gospel here at Thessalonica, and these women, these very same chief women, then got the attention of the men at Thessalonica, and caused them to pay close attention to the message of Paul and Silas.

Having now considered some important points found in ACTS 17:4, let's again read this verse, and consider some additional points. ACTS 17:4 *And some of them believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few.* Again as we mentioned earlier, the word "consorted" here means: "they joined themselves to," or "they threw in their lot with." In other words we could say it like this: When Paul and Silas came to Thessalonica and preached from the scriptures about Jesus Christ, there were those that believed what they were hearing was the truth from the word of God, and they cast in their lot with, and joined themselves to Paul and Silas much like the disciples joined themselves unto Jesus. In other words what really was taking place here was the establishment of the church at Thessalonica. We will now turn our focus a little on the some of them that believed here at Thessalonica.

We noted much earlier in this study {see page 91 of these notes} a church consists of much more than just a building, or a pastor, or of those so called important people who meet at a particular place. Jesus needs to be the center of attention, the focal point of all churches that are worth attending. Jesus said in MATTHEW 18:20 *For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.* Jesus made this statement defining in the simplest terms what a true church is. At Thessalonica those that believed the gospel message of Paul and Silas, that Jesus was indeed the Son of God, the Messiah foretold in Old Testament scripture, were the ones that made up the church that Paul was establishing here at Thessalonica. Those involved in the establishment of the church at Thessalonica followed Paul's advice found in 1 and 2 CORINTHIANS. 1 CORINTHIANS 11:1 *Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.* 2 CORINTHIANS 4:5 *For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.* This church at Thessalonica also, no doubt, had a meeting place other than the Jewish synagogue. And as we read on here in ACTS 17 we will note specific individuals who were a big part of this church at Thessalonica, who probably allowed this church, this assembly, to meet first in their own house.

ACTS 17:5 *But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. 6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; 7 Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. 8 And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. 9 And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.*

In these verses we are introduced to Jason. Jason, as noted in verse 5, has a house, and perhaps Paul and Silas were allowed of Jason to hold meetings in Jason's house. According to verse 7 Jason "received" as a guest into his house Paul and Silas. In total we find Jason's name five times in scripture; four times he is mentioned in ACTS 17, and once he is mentioned in ROMANS 16:21. I think the Holy Ghost inspired the

writers of New Testament scripture to mention Jason exactly five times to emphasize to us the fact that Jason was truly a GRACE Saint. Obviously Jason readily and immediately accepted the grace message of Paul, and as a result he too was soon persecuted, for ACTS 17:9 tells us that the rulers of Thessalonica took "security of Jason." Jason's name means "healer" or "one who will heal." This is a wonderful quality. Recall according to the scriptures we have read up to this point in time that just prior to arriving at Thessalonica, Paul and Silas were severely beaten back at Philippi. Then in less than a weeks time they had arrived at Thessalonica. According to what we have just read in ACTS 17:5-9 Jason took these two Apostles, Paul and Silas, into his own house, and in so doing offered them the opportunity to fully heal from the wounds suffered back at Philippi. In return Jason got to learn first hand the wonderful word of God from the mouths of Paul and Silas, and witness for himself their testimony in all aspects of their lives. Truly then in this sense Jason was a "healer" or "one who will heal."

We further see this healing quality of Jason in verse 9 where we again read: *And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.* The healing quality of Jason noted in this verse draws our attention to the word "security." This is an expression taken from the Roman courts, which in Latin means to receive sufficient bond, usually money for the fulfillment of the judgment. In this particular case part of the judgment seems to be that in order for Jason to be free, Paul and Silas had to leave Thessalonica, which in the end would bring a sort of "healing" to this whole uproar at Thessalonica. Perhaps we will mention more about this later, but for now remember that Jason was a "healer" or "one who will heal," which is the meaning of his name.

This healing quality also is a quality that is found in the lives of all full overcomers in that all full overcomers are healers in so far as other people are concerned. Just for example they pray for healing, and have the remedy for so many ills, and hurts, and distresses found in so many lives today. In other words they trust in the Lord for the healing themselves, and the healing of others. I imagine that each of us potential full overcomers find ourselves continually praying for the healing of ourselves, and others every hour of the day. Such a heart attitude is found in a full overcomers heart.

One more thing about Jason that I will mention here in passing; Coneybeare and Howson note that Jason probably accompanied Paul and Silas from Thessalonica to Corinth. They say this noting that Jason is with Paul when he writes ROMANS from Corinth, and says in ROMANS 16:21 *Timotheus my workfellow, and Lucius, and Jason, and Sosipater, my kinsmen, salute you.* None of us know from scripture when Jason left Thessalonica, and joined up with Paul, but let's go back to ACTS 17:9 and again note the security taken of Jason. It is possible that Jason may have had to put up his house as security, but if so, he was willing to do this, willing to give up all his worldly possessions to follow Paul as he followed Christ, for he had never before heard such wonderful teaching, and felt so good since accepting Jesus, and had found the race course he was willing to run for the rest of his life. In the end of his faithful pursuits, no doubt, Jason achieved God's best.

Before we leave the thought of the specific individual believers at Thessalonica, let's note that there were others besides Jason. We have already pointed out from verse 4 that there were certain devout Greeks, and a number of the chief women who believed in Thessalonica. Additionally in verse 6 we find that there were "certain brethren" associated with Jason that were brought before the rulers of the city. We are not told in our text who these men were, but we do find mentioned later in scripture of a couple of Thessalonians who accompanied Paul on some of his later journeys. ACTS 27:2 mentions *...one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica...*, whose name is also mentioned five times in scripture. ACTS 20:4 also tells of another man named Secundus of the Thessalonians, who is only mentioned this one time in scripture. Perhaps later in this study we will say much more about these two men of Thessalonica, especially Aristarchus, who was one of Paul's companions in travel according to ACTS 19:29. Mentioned with Aristarchus in PHILEMON 1:24 is Demas. Luke is also mentioned in this same verse, and Luke and Demas are mentioned again together in COLOSSIANS 4:14. Perhaps Demas was even from Thessalonica, see 2 TIMOTHY 4:10, which reads: *For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto*

Thessalonica;... . Along these very same lines of thought, this very day (January 14, 2006) I came across the following poem in Sister Bodie's study book of DANIEL, (page 87), whose author is not mentioned, but obviously thought long and hard about Demas and his relationship with Paul after reading the above verse in 2 TIMOTHY 4, and having studied the life of Paul:

Demas at Thessalonica

I love him still --- a noble soul --- this Paul;
But one must live, the part of wisdom choose.
What gain to Christ, were I to lose my all?
This Christ-mad man reck's not what I may lose.

I labored with him long and faithfully,
A fiery soul, whose zeal no words can tell.
His faith fails not; but yet, it seems to me,
His work is ended in that prison cell.

And so I left him and am home once more.
May follow trade and gain with none to let.
The bay, the streets are pleasant as of yore,
And all my friends are kind --- and yet, and yet---

That face like Luke's upon crowded way,
That glimpse of Jason's house I had today.

Let's read the following verses again. ACTS 17:5 *But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. 6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; 7 Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. 8 And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. 9 And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.*

In these verses we find a contrast between those who believed in ACTS 17:4, and those who believed not in verses 5-9. I looked up the phrase "believed not" (ACTS 17:5) and found it nineteen times in scripture. Nineteen is the number that has to do with FAITH. However the phrase "believed not" is exactly the opposite of FAITH. In HEBREWS 11:6 we read that without faith it is impossible to please God, the exact words from the King James version reads: *But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Without faith equates to "believed not."

We find the phrase "believed not" twice in PSALMS 78. In PSALMS 78 we find a lengthy portion concerning the children of Israel and their wandering in the wilderness was because they "believed not" God in spite of the many marvelous and miraculous wonders and works He had done on their behalf. Let's just look at a portion of that chapter, the rest which you can read and study on your own.

PSALMS 78:10 *They kept not the covenant of God, and refused to walk in his law; 11 And forgat his works, and his wonders that he had shewed them. 12 Marvellous things did he in the sight of their fathers, in the land of Egypt, in the field of Zoan. 13 He divided the sea, and caused them to pass through; and he made the waters to stand as an heap. 14 In the daytime also he led them with a cloud, and all the night with a light of fire. 15 He clave the rocks in the wilderness, and gave them drink as out of the great depths. 16 He brought streams also out of the rock, and caused waters to run down like rivers. 17 And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the most High in the*

wilderness. 18 And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust. 19 Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? 20 Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people? 21 Therefore the LORD heard this, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel; 22 Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation: 23 Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, 24 And had rained down manna upon them to eat, and had given them of the corn of heaven. 25 Man did eat angels' food: he sent them meat to the full. 26 He caused an east wind to blow in the heaven: and by his power he brought in the south wind. 27 He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea: 28 And he let it fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations. 29 So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire; 30 They were not estranged from their lust. But while their meat was yet in their mouths, 31 The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel. 32 For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works. 33 Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble. 34 When he slew them, then they sought him: and they returned and enquired early after God. 35 And they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer. 36 Nevertheless they did flatter him with their mouth, and they lied unto him with their tongues. 37 For their heart was not right with him, neither were they stedfast in his covenant. 38 But he, being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not: yea, many a time turned he his anger away, and did not stir up all his wrath. 39 For he remembered that they were but flesh; a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.

JUDE 1:5 summarizes what we have just read in PSALMS 78 in one sentence: *I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.*

In essence what we have read above is a reference to the Jews which believed not. Everywhere Paul went he found Jews which believed not. Paul himself, as Saul of Tarsus, was one of the most famous Jews which believed not until he met Jesus face to face on the road to Damascus. So Paul is familiar to such opposition, and as we have found in previous chapters, he has run in to many towns and place where his opposition was from the Jews which believed not. Review ACTS 9:23; ACTS 9:29; ACTS 13:50; ACTS 14:2; ACTS 14:5 & 6; and ACTS 14:19 for starters. Here at Thessalonica once again Paul faces opposition from the Jews which believed not. ACTS 17:5 *But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people.* An expounded translation of verse 5 would read something like this, and perhaps better explain the meaning here: "But the Jews, in a fury of jealousy, recruited some low fellows of the rabble from the streets, idlers in the market-place, some vicious men, dregs of the populace, and gathered a mob together, and threw the city into disorder, and besieging the house of Jason they searched for Paul and Silas, with the intention of bringing them out before the assembly of the people." The Apostle Paul later writes a commentary to the believing Thessalonians, and states in 2 THESSALONIANS 3:1 *Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free course, and be glorified, even as it is with you: 2 And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.* Obviously these Jews which believed not are the very same ones Paul speaks of here in 2 THESSALONIANS 3:2 who "have not faith."

Keep in mind that the Jews in any of these Roman cities, like Thessalonica, would be a minority, and a very small minority at that. There is no way that a small minority can incite a riot without outside help. The motive of these unbelieving Jews in verse 5-9 seems to be to show their loyalty to the Emperor, Caesar, and in so doing they would be protecting their own business interests. We will read in ACTS 18:2 during this same time period how that the Emperor kicked all the Jews out of Rome, so we can see how precarious a situation the Jews were in. These unbelieving Jews at Thessalonica, being a minority, didn't go along with Paul and Silas, and wanted the rulers of the city to know

that certain Jews (Paul and Silas) had recently come into town whom they didn't agree with. Since Paul and Silas were also Jews, these unbelieving Jews of Thessalonica wanted the rulers of their city to know that they didn't agree with them, nor did they want anything to do with Paul and Silas. Furthermore, and foremost, they were trying to get rid of Paul and Silas, for they didn't want to hear the gospel message that Paul preached. Paul himself explains the very reason that some of these Jews didn't want to hear his gospel message in his letter to the Jews, entitled HEBREWS.

HEBREWS 4:12 *For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* That word "quick" in HEBREWS 4:12 is a very powerful word in itself, number 2198 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, *zao*, meaning: living, to be alive, to be in full vigor. And next we find in HEBREWS 4:12 that word "powerful," number 1756 in the Strong's Greek Concordance, *energes*; a word only used three times in New Testament scripture, all in Paul's writings, meaning: active. Twice this word "energes" is translated effectual, and the way Paul uses it in 1 CORINTHIANS 16:9 helps better explain the kind of opposition he faced in every city he visited. 1 CORINTHIANS 16:9 *For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.* The Lord had well prepared Paul for these many adversaries, for recall back in ACTS 9:16 that the Lord had told Ananias of Damascus this fact concerning Paul: *For I will shew him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake.* Paul after having been shown by the Lord ...*how great things he must suffer for my name's sake...* still said in his own heart; "I don't care how hard the journey, I do want God's best in my life; I will go on with the Lord by the guidance of the Holy Ghost, *The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*" {Study HEBREWS 13:6}.

Back here in Thessalonica there were many adversaries, sparked by the unbelieving Jews who themselves found ...*the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart...* and believed not. In an effort to get rid of Paul and Silas these unbelieving Jews paid off some low life's to set the city of Thessalonica into an uproar over Paul and Silas. ACTS 17:5-9 *But the Jews which believed not, moved with envy, took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort, and gathered a company, and set all the city on an uproar, and assaulted the house of Jason, and sought to bring them out to the people. 6 And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; 7 Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. 8 And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. 9 And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go.*

Note that phrase in verse 6 ...*These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also...* This is quite a statement. Obviously the fame of the Apostle Paul, and his gospel message preceded him, for the Jews at Thessalonica had heard how that in other cities Paul's gospel message had been the occasion of confusion and disorder, especially to the unbelievers. One commentator states "the apostles, according to the cry of these men, had thrown the whole world into disorder, and had made disturbances in kingdoms and cities, wherever they came; and had made innovations in religion, and turned men from their old way of worship to another; these; say they are come hither also; to make the like disorders and disturbances, as elsewhere."

Also note in verse 6 that Paul and Silas were not found at Jason's house at that time. Keep in mind it has only been about four weeks since Paul and Silas were violently beaten in Philippi, and I imagine that they were better aware of the intentions of these unbelieving Jews at Thessalonica. We know the Lord spared Paul and Silas the same fate they faced at Philippi, for this mob after not finding Paul and Silas, ...*drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city.*

Reading again from verse 6 through 8 we find the accusation that was made before the rulers of the city: ... *These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also; 7 Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of*

Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. 8 And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. Verse 7 gets down to the root of their complaint in generic terms, stating: ...these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. The rulers of the city were totally ignorant of Christ's kingdom, but obviously were troubled by the claim that there was another king.

The claim that Jesus was King of the Jews was nothing new. When Jesus was two years old we find in MATTHEW 2:1 & 2 that there were wise men from the east who came to Jerusalem, and asked Herod, (who himself was entitled king of the Jews): ...Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. If you study that chapter you will see that Herod desperately sought where Jesus was, with the intention of having him killed. Some 31 years later Jesus was brought before Pilate, the Roman governor of Judea, and we find the following conversation between Pilate and Jesus in JOHN 18. JOHN 18:33 Then Pilate entered into the judgment hall again, and called Jesus, and said unto him, Art thou the King of the Jews? 34 Jesus answered him, Sayest thou this thing of thyself, or did others tell it thee of me? 35 Pilate answered, Am I a Jew? Thine own nation and the chief priests have delivered thee unto me: what hast thou done? 36 Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence. 37 Pilate therefore said unto him, Art thou a king then? Jesus answered, Thou sayest that I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice. 38 Pilate saith unto him, What is truth? And when he had said this, he went out again unto the Jews, and saith unto them, I find in him no fault at all. Pilate then sought to let Jesus go free. These Jews of Jerusalem wanted Jesus crucified, and cried out to Pilate in JOHN 19:12 ...If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king speaketh against Caesar. MATTHEW 27 then tells us, starting in verse 22: Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ? They all say unto him, Let him be crucified. 23 And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified. 24 When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it. 25 Then answered all the people, and said, His blood be on us, and on our children. They then crucified Jesus, and JOHN 19:19 continues: And Pilate wrote a title, and put it on the cross. And the writing was, JESUS OF NAZARETH THE KING OF THE JEWS. 20 This title then read many of the Jews: for the place where Jesus was crucified was nigh to the city: and it was written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin. 21 Then said the chief priests of the Jews to Pilate, Write not, The King of the Jews; but that he said, I am King of the Jews. 22 Pilate answered, What I have written I have written.

Returning to our text of ACTS 17:7 & 8 we again read: Whom Jason hath received: and these all do contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus. 8 And they troubled the people and the rulers of the city, when they heard these things. We stated above that the rulers of the city were totally ignorant of Christ's kingdom, but obviously were troubled by the claim that there was another king. The unbelieving Jews who brought these charges unto the magistrates had already themselves rejected the preaching of Jesus by Paul, and have rejected Paul's statements found in ACTS 17:3 ...that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ. These rulers of Thessalonica were a lot more cautious and deliberate than the magistrates of Philippi in that they did not compromise themselves or the privileges of their city (to the Roman Empire) by making a quick wrong decision in this dispute between the Christians and the Jews. We find in ACTS 17:9 that these rulers of Thessalonica resolved this situation by taking security from Jason, and certain other brethren friendly to Paul, and then released them. ACTS 17:9 again reads: And when they had taken security of Jason, and of the other, they let them go. This word "security" as we noted earlier {see page 373} is an expression taken from the Roman courts, which in Latin means to receive sufficient

bond, usually money for the fulfillment of the judgment. This "security" may have even included Jason's house, though we are not told this in scripture. In this particular case part of the judgment seems to be that in order for Jason to be free, Paul and Silas had to leave Thessalonica, and probably a written statement was then made by Jason and those other brethren with him that they were to see to it that Paul and Silas immediately leave town. Additionally it seems that part of this statement included wording that Paul and Silas would not return to Thessalonica. Any later efforts to have this bond canceled were apparently unsuccessful, thus we read this statement from the Apostle Paul in 1 THESSALONIANS 2:17 & 18 -- *But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire. 18 Wherefore we would have come unto you, even I Paul, once and again; but Satan hindered us.*

ACTS 17:10 *And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.* Here we find another of those many "midnight" experiences noted in scripture. Paul and Silas were "sent away" by night unto Berea. This "midnight" experience really had a positive tone to it however. Paul and Silas were lovingly sent away unto Berea by brethren who had a deep concern for their welfare. Possibly Jason and some others accompanied them. Perhaps the brethren of Thessalonica had close ties with those of Berea, and knew that Paul and Silas would be welcomed there. No doubt as Paul and Silas left Thessalonica by night they reviewed with each other their accomplishments in Thessalonica. And we too know some of what they accomplished there by reading and studying Paul's epistles to the THESSALONIANS.

One of the first things that you will notice in studying 1 & 2 THESSALONIANS is the mention of Timothy's name. We don't read of Timothy accompanying Paul and Silas from Philippi unto Thessalonica, but perhaps he did. At any rate Timothy was not asked to leave Thessalonica like Paul and Silas were, ACTS 17:10 tells us as much. It may be that a period of time elapsed, and then Timothy left Philippi tracing the footsteps of Paul, which later took him unto Thessalonica. Timothy could then very well have further established those Saints in Thessalonica. Obviously the Saints at Thessalonica knew who Timothy was, for his name is included in both epistles addresses. Later in life, in PHILIPPIANS 2, Paul would write his heart felt thoughts on Timothy, stating in PHILIPPIANS 2:19 *But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. 20 For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state. 21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. 22 But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.*

One final reflection concerning Thessalonica. We know from studying these first ten verses of ACTS 17 that Paul and Silas were at Thessalonica at least three weeks, and maybe a bit longer. Those that latched onto Paul's gospel did so in this short period of time. And Paul didn't hold back anything in the lessons he was able to teach them. Those that believed were readily willing to receive Paul's gospel. Paul concludes each of the five chapters of 1 THESSALONIANS with references looking forward to the coming of the Lord. It seems he knew that he wouldn't be back, but was quick to point them in the proper direction, and having them constantly looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, and for His soon coming. They learned these truths in a short period of time, having readily latched onto Paul's gospel. How fast are you willing to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ?

The Establishment of the church at Berea

ACTS 17:10 *And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews.* Berea was located about 60 miles southwest of Thessalonica. It would have taken Paul and Silas, and whoever was traveling with them, at least two full travel days to get there, possible more. Berea wouldn't be known today if Paul hadn't visited it, and Luke recorded this in scripture. Berea had a couple of rivers running through it, and was known to have streams of