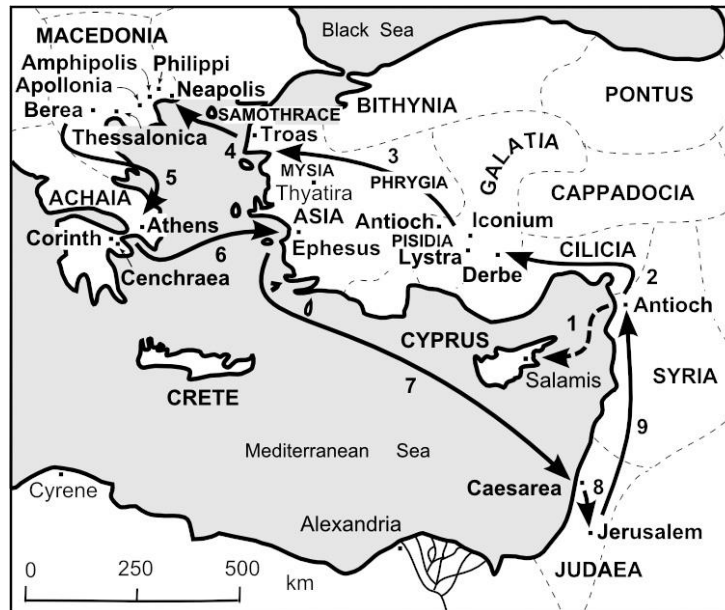


Cornerstone Faith of West Liberty
 Setting the Stage—Intro to 1&2 Thessalonians (Acts 17:1-9)
 May 4, 2025



<https://www.thebiblejourney.org/the-bible-journey/10-pauls-journey-to-phrygia-macedonia/paul-starts-his-2nd-missionary-journey/>

I. The city

- Thessalonica flourished for hundreds of years, partly because of its ideal location.
 - o It was situated on the banks of a hospitable harbor in the Thermaic Gulf near the northwest corner of the Aegean Sea.
 - o The Egnatian Way, the main Roman road from Rome to the Orient via Byzantium (modern Istanbul), passed through the city.
 - o Estimates of the population of Thessalonica in New Testament times place it at near 200,000 (Everett F. Harrison, *Introduction to the New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964, p. 245).
- Takes place during Paul's 2nd Missionary journey around 50 A.D.
- Pass through Amphipolis and Apollonia indicates not stopping and witnessing
- Paul reasons with Jews 3 Sabbaths (about 21 days)
- Paul preaches Jesus—the suffering messiah (David ben Joseph and David ben Judah)
 - o Some Jews believe
 - o Multitudes of devout Greeks believe
 - o Many prominent women believe
 - o A church is founded after only about 4 weeks of Paul's teaching
 - Teaching them what God wanted them to be, know and do

Zechariah 4:6 (NKJV) *So he answered and said to me: "This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel [Name meaning—those descended from Babylon—the world—us]: 'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' Says the LORD of hosts.*

II. Success breeds contempt

- Non-believing Jews are jealous

Matthew 15:1-9 (NKJV) *Then the scribes and Pharisees who were from Jerusalem came to Jesus, saying, ² "Why do Your disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat bread." ³ He answered and said to them, "Why do you also transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? ⁴ For God commanded, saying, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'He who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.' ⁵ But you say, 'Whoever says to his father or mother, "Whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God"—⁶ then he need not honor his father or mother.' Thus you have made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. ⁷ Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: ⁸ 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, And honor Me with their lips, But their heart is far from Me. ⁹ And in vain they worship Me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' "*

- The accusation:

- These are they that turn the world upside down
- Could this be stated of us with all our “advantages”?

2 Corinthians 13:5 (NKJV) *Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?--unless indeed you are disqualified.*

- The results:

- They go after Paul Silas and Timothy but cannot find them so they attack another member of the church—Are we willing to take the heat for another believer?

III. How About us (Census data—2024-2025)?

- Approximately 1450 people--56% female and 44% male and 96% white with few other ethnicities mixed in among us
- 68% have no church affiliation (about 986 people) with 25% being some type of Protestant the balance is others like Catholic

IV. What are we doing to reach the 986 people who have no church affiliation?

Matthew 28:18-20 (NKJV) *And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.*

- Are we successfully reaching our own families? Are we reaching out to our neighbors?

The Great Commandments

Matthew 22:37-40 (NKJV) *Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' ³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'*

John 13:34-35 (NKJV) *A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*