

## **“Godly Heavenly Authority Vs. Human Worldly Authority!”**

**Acts 17:1-9**

Now when **They** (**Paul & Silas**) had passed through **Amphipolis** and **Apollonia**, they came to **Thessalonica**, where there was a **Synagogue of the Jews**. Then **Paul**, as his custom was, went into **Them**, and for Three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the **Scriptures**, explaining and demonstrating that the **Christ (Messiah)** had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and **Saying (Rhema)**, “*This **Jesus (Son of Man)** Whom I Preach to **You** is the **Christ (Son of God)**!”* And some of **Them (Jews)** were persuaded; and a great multitude of the **Devout Greeks**, and **not a few (many)** of the **Leading Women**, joined **Paul** and **Silas**. But the **Jews** who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the **Evil Men** from the marketplace, and gathering a **Mob**, set **All the City** in an uproar and attacked the **House of Jason**, and sought to bring **Them (Paul & Silas)** out to the **People**. But when **They** did not find **Them (Paul & Silas)**, **They (Unbelieving Jews)** dragged **Jason** and **some brethren** to the **Rulers of the City**, crying out, “*These (**Paul & Silas**) Who have turned the world upside down have come here too. **Jason** has harbored **Them**, and **These** are all acting contrary to the decrees of **Caesar**, saying there is another king, **Jesus**.”* And **They (Unbelieving Jews)** troubled the **Crowd** and the **Rulers of the City** when **They (Unbelieving Citizens)** heard these things. So, when **They** had taken **Security (Legal Promise To Expel Them From The City)** from **Jason** and the **Rest (House Church)**, **They** let **Them** go. **Acts 17:1-9 (NKJV)**

**Q**

**“Why Use This Major Roman Highway Route & Center On Thessalonica?”**

**(Slide 9)**

See Map In **Appendix 1#** (Page 6): **“Egyptian Way” – “Via Egnatia”**

**A - History Of Thessalonica**

- 1) Founded 316 B.C. By Cassander - 1 of 4 Great Generals of Alexander the Great’s Grand Army**
- 2) Named After General Cassander’s Wife (Half-Sister of Alexander the Great) – “Thessalonike”**
- 3) Largest Trade City Between Rome on the “Appian Way” – Highway #1 & Byzantium (Modern Constantinople) on the “Via Egnatia” – Highway #2**
- 4) Main Trade & Military Route To Asia Minor & Greater Asia – Orient**

**Q**

**“After Arriving In Thessalonica By Way Of Amphipolis & Apollonia, From Philippi; What Does Paul, Silas, & Timothy Do According To Their Jewish Heritage & Ritual On The Sabbath Day?”**

**A**

**They Enter The Local Synagogue & Await An Opportunity To Preach / Teach / Debate**  
**“Now when **They (Paul & Silas)** had passed through **Amphipolis** and **Apollonia**, they came to **Thessalonica**, where there was a **Synagogue of the Jews**. Then **Paul**, as his custom was, went into **Them**”...** **Acts 17:1-2a**

**NOTE**

**Paul’s Always Teaches & Preaches The Full Gospel Message To Both Jews & Gentiles Alike Whenever Entering A New Territory Or City!**

**LET’S REVIEW**

**Q**

**“What Is The Full Message of the Gospel Of The Good News?”**

**Church’s Evangelical Mission Has Two Main Components**

**1) Preaching (Proclaiming & Sharing)**

**The Full Good News – Gospel Of Jesus Christ With The World Consists Of 7# Interrelated & Sequential Concepts Of Full Faith & Truth**

## 2) Teaching (Educating & Offering)

The Necessary Concepts That Accompany The Proclamation Of The Full Good News Consists Of 7# Interrelated & Sequential Concepts Of **Full Salvation & Sanctification**

### A) Preaching The Complete Good News Of Full Faith & Truth

- 1) Christ Has Come & Lived Perfectly Among Us
- 2) Christ Has Truly Died & Has Truly Risen From The Dead
- 3) Christ Has Ascended Into Heaven & Makes Constant Intercession For Us All
- 4) Christ Has Sent His Holy Spirit To Live Within Us & Guide Us Into All Truth
- 5) Christ Has Entrusted Us With Preaching Repentance & Forgiveness Of Sins In His Name
- 6) Christ Has Asked Us To Serve Others & Teach Them Everything He Taught Us!
  - 7) Christ Shall Come Again To Judge The Living & The Dead & Take Us To Heaven To Live With Him Forever

### B) Teaching (Educating & Offering)

- 1) Age Of Fulfillment Becomes Reality (Time Of Fulfillment Is Here)  
**Complete With Signs (Miracles & Wonders)**
- 2) Ancient Prophecies In The Old Testament Fulfilled By Christ In The New Testament  
**(With Some Prophecies Yet To Be Fulfilled Concerning The Last Days)**
  - 3) Proclamation: Preaching & Teaching Of The Good News
  - 4) Call To Repentance In Honor Of Christ's Sacrifice
  - 5) Reception & Forgiveness Of Sins In Christ (Redeemer / Savior)
  - 6) Call To Surrender One's Will To God's Will In Christ (Lord / Master)
  - 7) Call To Holiness & Service In The Name Of Christ

#### NOTE

**Paul Always Uses A 4-Part Formula When Sharing The Gospel of Good News**

#### 1) OT Kerygma

Central Story of Deliverance & Salvation of God's People According To God's Plan & Promise

#### 2) NT Kerygma

Central Story of Deliverance & Salvation of God's People Fulfilled In Jesus Christ

#### 3) Support With Various Scriptures

Use The Scriptures Read In The Synagogue / Church Meeting That Day  
&/Or Use Supporting Scriptures From The Bible

#### 4) Exhort & Encourage

The Audience To Go Further In Their Thinking & Understanding Of The Past & Their Lives

#### NOTE

Ancient Jewish Tradition Is To Have Three Readings On The Sabbath Day  
Contained In A Set of Three Books Of Prayer & Readings  
That Cover The Entirety Of The Law In A Rotating Three-Year Cycle.

#### NOTE

The Three Readings Each Week Were Taken From  
1) The Law (Torah), 2) The Prophets, & 3) Another Choice  
From The Scriptures To Support The 1<sup>st</sup> &/or 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading.

#### Q

*"How Persistent Was Paul & His Companions In Preaching & Teaching The Gospel Message?"*

#### A

Very Persistent – Three Weeks Of Intense Prayer & Work  
*"And for Three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the **Scriptures**"... Acts 17:2b*

#### Q

*"What Is Paul's Major Emphasis After Softening Up His Audience  
& Pulling Down Barriers To Reason & Understanding  
In The Old Testament Interpretation Of Scriptures True Intent & Meaning?"*

## A1

To Present God The Father's True Intentions For His Anointed & Chosen One The Messiah  
The Once For All Sacrifice For The Whole Human Race!

*"And for Three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the **Scriptures**, explaining and demonstrating that the **Christ (Messiah)** had to suffer and rise again from the dead"... Acts 17:2b-3a*

Paul Later Writes, *"By that will **We** Have Been Sanctified through the Offering of the Body of **Jesus Christ** Once for All. And every priest stands ministering daily and offering repeatedly the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins. But this **Man**, after He (**Great High Priest of God**) had Offered One Sacrifice for Sins Forever, Sat Down at the Right Hand of God (Father), from that time waiting till His Enemies are made **His Footstool**. For By One Offering He Has Perfected Forever Those Who Are Being Sanctified."* Hebrews 10:10-14

## A2

To Present God The Father's Anointed & Chosen Messiah  
In Light Of Recent Events To Be Jesus (Son of Man) the Christ (Son of God)!

*"This **Jesus (Son of Man)** Whom I Preach to You is the **Christ (Son of God)**!" ... Acts 17:3b*

### Q

*"How Effective Was Paul's Three Week Preaching, Teaching, Debating, & Reasoning  
From God's Word & By God's Indwelling Holy Spirit?"*

**A – Very Effective!**

*"And some of Them (Jews) were persuaded, and a great multitude of the Devout Greeks,  
and not a few (many) of the **Leading Women**, joined **Paul and Silas**" ... Acts 17:4*

### Q

*"What Happened To Timothy Again?"*

### A

Most Likely Sent Ahead On The Road To Beorea / Berea  
To Avoid Another Close Call Of Imprisonment, Like Recently In Philippi!  
He Is Seen Next Already Awaiting Paul & Silas In Berea – Acts 17:14

### Q

*"What Did The Non-Believing - Unpersuaded Jews Do In Response To Paul's Work?"*

### A

They Became Envious & Started A Mob To Attack The House Church In Which They Were Staying  
*"But the **Jews** who were not persuaded, becoming envious, took some of the **Evil Men**  
from the marketplace, and gathering a Mob, set All the City in an uproar and attacked  
the House of Jason, and sought to bring Them (Paul & Silas) out to the People." ... Acts 17:5*

### Q

*"Who Is The House Church Host, **Jason**?"*

**A – Jason** (Greek Name) / **Joshua** (Jewish Name)

Same Jason Who IS Mentioned Again In The Closing / Farewell of the Epistle to the Romans!  
*"Timothy, My Fellow Worker, Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, My Fellow Countrymen, Greet You."*  
Romans 16:21

### Q

*"Who Is In **Jason's Household**?"*

### A

Most Likely Based On Other Later Accounts In Thessalonica – **Aristarchus** & **Secundus**  
*"And Sopater of Berea accompanied him to Asia, also **Aristarchus** & **Secundus** of the **Thessalonians**,  
and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy, and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia."* ... Acts 20:4

## SIDE NOTE

**Aristarchus** Becomes The 1<sup>st</sup> Bishop of Thessalonica After Paul's Martyrdom In Rome

### Q

*"What Did The Non-Believing - Unpersuaded Jews Do  
In Response To Not Finding Paul & Silas In Jason's House?"*

A

They Brought Charges Of Treason & Sedition

Against Jason & His Family & The Other House Church Members!

But when **They** did not find **Them** (Paul & Silas), **They** (Unbelieving Jews) dragged Jason and some brethren to the Rulers of the City, crying out, "These (Paul & Silas) Who have turned the world upside down have come here too. Jason has harbored Them, and These are all acting contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying there is another king, Jesus." ... Acts 17:6-7

*"Listen Again Oh My People,*

*To The Warning Our Lord Gave Us,*

*To Those Who Will Live To See End Times!"*

*"These Things I have spoken to You, that You should not be made to stumble. They will put You out of the Synagogues (Churches); Yes, the Time Is Coming that Whoever kills You will think that They offer God Service. And these things They will do to You because They have not known the Father nor Me. But These Things I have told You, that when the Time Comes, You may remember that I told You of Them."* John 16:1-4a

Q

*"What Was The Response Of The Majority Of The City's Citizens To These Accusations?"*

A

They Were Upset & Troubled!

*"And They (Unbelieving Jews) troubled the Crowd and the Rulers of the City when They (Unbelieving Citizens) heard these things." ... Acts 17:8*

Q

*"What Did The Unbelieving Citizens of the City Ask For In Assurance To Ease Their Anger & Troubled Spirits?"*

A

Security – Promises / Oaths of Personal Assurance From Jason, His Family & The House Church Members That They Themselves Would Ask Paul & Silas To Voluntarily Leave!

*"So, when They had taken Security (Legal Promise To Expel Them From The City) from Jason and the Rest (House Church), They let Them go." ... Acts 17:9*

#### SIDE NOTE

The "Egyptian Way" – "Via Egnatia" Will Later Be Renamed

The "Beautiful Feet Of The Gospel Way!"

See Appendix 2# (Pages 7-8)

<https://biblearchaeology.org/research/new-testament-era/2531>

[-how-beautiful-are-the-feet-on-the-via-egnatia?highlight=WyJwaGlsaXBwaSJd](https://biblearchaeology.org/research/new-testament-era/2531)

*"Let Us Follow The Plan of Paul*

*For Preaching & Teaching The Full Gospel Of Jesus Christ Each & Every Day,*

*Wherever We Go, & In What Ever We Are Doing,*

*& Let Us Not Count The Cost To Ourselves, Or To Our Livelihood!*

*Let Us Instead Count The Cost In Eternity For All Those,*

*Who Have Not Yet Turned From Their Sin To The Living God,*

*Who Can Save Them By His Son Jesus Christ, In This Life,*

*& Who Will Reward Them, & Give Them Rest Forever In Eternity!"*



# Appendix 1# "Egyptian Way" – "Via Egnatia"



## **Appendix 2# “Beautiful Feet Of The Gospel Way”**

### **Peter, Silvanus, John Mark**

The first Christians to walk this road were probably Peter, Silvanus, and John Mark in AD 42. Later, the Apostle Paul and his teams travelled on this road on at least three occasions. The believers from Philippi and Thessaloniki used it to spread the Gospel in Macedonia and also for church business. The Apostle Peter, after ministering in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia and Bithynia, pressed on to Rome in the second year of Emperor Claudius in AD 42 (Jerome 1994:3:361). Peter and his co-workers, Silvanus (Silas) and John Mark, could have walked the 746 Roman miles (1,120 km / 696 miles) on the Via Egnatia from Byzantium (later known as Constantinople, now known as Istanbul) to Dyrrachium on the Adriatic Sea and then crossed over to Brundisium in Italy and taken the Via Appia to Rome, or they could have taken a ship via Corinth and then on to Italy.

Firmin O’Sullivan, in his important book *The Egnatia Way*, points out that a ship from Byzantium to Rome via Corinth would take between eight to twelve weeks. Walking the Via Egnatia and Via Appia would take between four and five weeks (1972: 200), half the sailing time. It would have been advantageous for the missionary team to walk to Rome on the Via Egnatia and plant churches along the way in Macedonia. This would account for the vision that the Apostle Paul had at Alexandrian Troas that indicated there were already communities of believers in Macedonia that needed help with the propagation of the Gospel when Paul arrived in the city on his second missionary journey (Acts 16:9). On the other hand, the Apostle Peter was in Corinth at one time and had some influence in the church in that city (cf. 1 Cor. 3:22; 9:5). Whether he visited Corinth when he was going to Rome, or coming from Rome, cannot be ascertained.

The First Epistle of Peter was most likely written soon after Peter’s arrival in Rome (AD 42) as a follow-up letter to the churches in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Silvanus, most likely, carried this letter of encouragement for those believers that were now going through some local persecution (1 Pet. 5:12). His route from Rome would have taken him on the Via Appia and then the Via Egnatia to Byzantium. He would have then boarded a ship and sailed to Amisus in Pontus (Hemer 1977–78: 239–243). If Peter sent his Second Epistle via a courier service from Rome, the dispatch would arrive in Byzantium in three weeks (O’Sullivan 1972: 200).

### **Paul’s Second Missionary Journey**

The Apostle Paul first visited Europe during his second missionary journey in AD 50 (Acts 16:11–17:10). The cities that he visited followed the Via Egnatia: Neapolis (now Kavala), Philippi, Amphipolis, Apollonia, and Thessaloniki. The exact route of the Via from Apollonia to Thessaloniki is not known archaeologically and is still debated by scholars (Hatzopoulos 1997:199–212). When the apostle and his team left Thessaloniki for Berea, they would have walked the Via Egnatia toward Pella, but would have taken a secondary road to Berea. The believers in Philippi took advantage of the Via Egnatia to send two financial gifts to Paul while he ministered in Thessaloniki (Phil. 4:15–17).

### **The Thessalonian Believers**

The Apostle Paul wrote to the church in Thessaloniki: “For from you the word of the Lord has sounded forth, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place. Your faith toward God has gone out, so that we do not need to say anything” (1 Thess. 1:8). The Thessalonian believers took advantage of the Roman road system to spread the Gospel and demonstrate their love to all the believers in Macedonia (1 Thess. 4:10). Not only did they reach Macedonia with the Gospel, but also Achaia (Greece proper) and every place. Thessaloniki was strategically located in Macedonia with a major port on the Thermaic Gulf. The Gospel could go forth via commercial ships to Asia Minor, Phoenicia and Judea, Egypt, and other areas. The Apostle Paul would have made Thessaloniki a major base of operations like he did Ephesus and Corinth, but Satan, in some way, hindered him (1 Thess. 2:18).

### **Paul’s Third Missionary Journey**

The Apostle Paul spent a good portion of his third missionary journey ministering in the city of Ephesus in Asia Minor from AD 52–55. After the uproar of the mob instigated by the silversmiths, the Apostle Paul departed Ephesus for Macedonia (Acts 19:23–20:1). During his time in this region, he probably also went to Illyricum on the western end of the Via Egnatia. Professor F.F. Bruce suggested that Paul wanted to “spend some time in a Latin-speaking environment (such as he would find in Illyricum) [thinking it to] be a helpful preparation for his planned campaign in Spain” (1985: 274). From Dyrrachium or Apollonia on the Adriatic Sea he could have sailed for Corinth in order to spend the winter (AD 57, Acts 20:2; Rom. 15:19).

### **Epaphroditus**

The church at Philippi appointed one of their own, Epaphroditus, as their “sent one” (apostle) to take a financial gift to the Apostle Paul while he was under house arrest in Rome (Phil. 2:25, 28; 4:18; Acts 28:30; AD 60 or 61). Most likely Epaphroditus would have had others go with him when he carried the money to Rome, since this was the practice in the early Church (cf. Acts 20:4). Their journey to Rome, either walking or by taking a cart, would have taken them on the Via Egnatia from Philippi to Dyrrachium on the Adriatic Sea (369 Roman miles), then across the Straits of Otranto to Brundisium.



### **Epaphroditus (Continued)**

Here they would pick up the Via Appia and follow that all the way to Rome (about 360 Roman miles). More than likely, the trip covering 729 miles would have been covered in 57 days, with a rest on each Lord's Day, a trip of almost two months. Aelius Aristides departed from Smyrna as he traveled to Rome during the winter of AD 143–144 and described the hardships and miseries of his journey on the Via Egnatia (Ramsay 1925:72; Aristides 1986). If Epaphroditus and his friends made this trip during the winter, this might explain why he got deathly sick and almost died (Phil. 2:27, 30).

### **Paul's Fourth Missionary Journey**

The Book of Acts ends abruptly with the Apostle Paul still under house arrest in Rome waiting for his appeal to be brought before Emperor Nero. He apparently was acquitted by Nero and released from his first imprisonment in Rome and went on a fourth missionary journey. The exact itinerary of this journey has been debated by scholars based on the scattered hints in the Prison Epistles (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon) and the Pastoral Epistles (1 and 2 Timothy and Titus). It is known that the Apostle Paul was in Macedonia on this missionary endeavor because he wrote to his son in the faith, Timothy, who was in Ephesus, a letter from Macedonia (1 Tim. 1:3). As the Apostle Paul traveled through the province of Macedonia, he would have again used the Via Egnatia.

### **Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch on the Orontes**

Ignatius, the bishop of Antioch in Syria, was condemned by Emperor Trajan and sent to Rome for execution in AD 110. He was marched across Asia Minor by a Roman guard consisting of ten soldiers but was allowed to visit with, and write to, Christians along his journey. They sailed from Alexandria Troas to Neapolis (cf. Acts 16:11) and spent some time in Philippi. In a twist of irony, Ignatius traveled on the Via Egnatia, the Latin form of his name, to the Adriatic Sea and then on to Rome! Somewhere along his journey he wrote to the church at Rome these famous words: "I am writing to all the Churches, and I give injunctions to all men, that I am dying willingly for God's sake, if you do not hinder it. I beseech you, be not "an unseasonable kindness" to me. Suffer me to be eaten by the beasts, through whom I can attain to God. I am God's wheat, and I am ground by the teeth of wild beasts that I may be found pure bread of Christ" (Ignatius to the Romans 4:1; LCL 1:231).

### **Conclusions**

The Lord in His sovereignty used the Roman army to build a road intended for military purposes, but in a striking contrast, this road was later used to spread the gospel of peace. The Apostle Paul had written to the believers in Rome: "Therefore, being justified by faith we have peace with God" (Rom. 5:1). Paul's important theological work on the spiritual condition of humanity began by stating that all humanity – Jew and Gentile, male and female, bond and free, are all sinners and have come short of God's glory, or perfection (Rom. 1–3).

God, in the Person of His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, died on Calvary's Cross to pay for all the sins of all humanity. He would justify: the act of God whereby He declares a sinner righteous, any and all who would put their trust in Him, and Him alone for their salvation. Doing good deeds, keeping the commandments, or any works-righteousness, including water baptism, could never justify a sinner (Rom. 4–5); only faith alone, in the Lord Jesus Christ alone, could justify anyone. Have you trusted the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior and know that you have peace with God? The eternal destiny of an individual, Heaven or Hell, is the most important decision one could ever make. He goes on to discuss the sanctification of the believer in the Lord Jesus (Rom. 6-8). The believer is set apart for the Lord's work and is engaged in spiritual warfare as they live their lives for the Lord Jesus.

### **Later Thoughts From Ambrose – The Bishop Of Milan 4<sup>th</sup> Century**

Ambrose, the bishop of Milan (AD 374–397), drew interesting parallels, using military language, between the Roman army marching on the Roman roads and the spiritual warfare that Christians find themselves engaged. He stated: "When a soldier sets out on the Way he does not decide the order of march for himself, nor does he choose the route according to his own will, take pleasant shortcuts or fall behind the standards. He receives an itinerary from the emperor and keeps to it. He advances in the prescribed order; he marches with his weapons and covers the route by the right road – so that he may find supplies waiting in places where they have been got ready. If he took some other route, he would not get his rations or find the proper billet (mansio [cf. John 14:6]), for the commander gives orders for these to be prepared for those who follow him, and do not go off either to the right or the left from the correct route."

"A true soldier does well not to leave the Way but to follow his commander, because the officer does not consider what will suit himself but what is possible for all. That is why he arranges for halts. The army marches three days, and rests on the fourth. Cities are chosen which lie at three or four days from each other, or even more, if there is plenty of water and supplies are abundant; so, the journey is done without fatigue, until they reach a chosen, as it were royal city, in which tired armies find refreshment" (On Psalm 118 (119), verse 33; cited in O'Sullivan 1972: 196).