

**Bible e-Study** on the book of Acts (17)

**Some 'bad characters'**

*“6 But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials, shouting: “These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here, 7 and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar’s decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus.”*

Acts 17: 6-7

**NUGGET** – It’s easy to want to skip over this episode of what takes place in Thessalonica and move on to the ‘more noble’ Jews of Berea or even the juicy part of Paul in Athens debating the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. But if we do that we miss out on the foundation of how the church got started in a place to where eventually St. Paul writes 2 epistles. The church in Thessalonica comes into being through teaching and preaching along with controversy and accusations.

We have Paul going to the synagogue for 3 weeks, teaching and preaching about the messiah and making clear that in deed Jesus is that promised Anointed One. And notice that Jews, and Greeks who have accepted Jewish teachings, are worshipping together. The believers are classified as Jews, God-fearing Greeks and prominent women. All of this goes along peacefully. Until... until jealousy arose among some of the Jews who, evidently, didn’t believe Paul’s teaching.

In their jealousy, they come after Paul and Silas. But first they gather up some ‘bad characters’ to form a mob and give these who are jealous the cover of numbers against Paul and the believers “who have caused trouble all over the world”! What a thing to witness – the trouble in the world has come to us and we need to do something about it! Of course they also use the scare tactic that Paul and the believers are advocating against the status quo, against Caesar. The officials’ reaction is:

·           turmoil and punishment of the believers they can find.

The reason this episode is important for us is that we need to consider that such things may happen to us. But that will only occur if, as Silas and Paul, we preach and teach the whole truth regarding Jesus Christ. I’m reminded of Jesus parable of the wheat and the tares – letting both grow up together.

In Thessalonica there were those who believed, those who were jealous, those who were bothered, those who shouted, those who welcomed Paul and his teaching into their homes. There was no uniform reception of the good news of Jesus as the Messiah. There was confusion and controversy, along with belief. Paul did not stay to try and sort thing out. The seed had been planted and it was time to move on and scatter more seed. Of course it need watering and fertilizer and when you read [1&2 Thessalonians](#) you read some that. But in the end it is God who called some to believe and He gave them what they needed to grow and thrive even among the ‘tares’ of the disbelieving and the jealous.

**APPLICATION -**

1. We do well to remember that the Gospel is what we are called to and *that* alone is what gives us the power to grow. We want to keep our focus on Hearing, Sharing and Living the Gospel and not allow ourselves to be distracted by the ‘bad characters’ that will come from those who are jealous of the truth that God grants in His word.

**PRAY** – Dear Heavenly Father, give us a hunger for Your Word to strengthen us and guide us. Grant us the to Holy Spirit to focus on Your gifts of mercy and grace amidst whatever distractions seek to draw us away from You. In Jesus name, Amen.