

Acts 17:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews:

Analysis

When they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia—These cities along the Via Egnatia (the major Roman highway connecting Asia to Rome) received no recorded ministry, illustrating Paul's selective strategy guided by the Spirit. The Greek verb *diodeuo* (διοδεύω) means "to travel through" without stopping—a significant omission suggesting divine direction toward strategic population centers.

They came to Thessalonica, where was a synagogue of the Jews (συναγωγή τῶν Ἰουδαίων)—Thessalonica was the capital of Macedonia with a population of ~200,000, a major commercial port, and home to a substantial Jewish community. Paul's consistent pattern was "to the Jew first" (Romans 1:16), using synagogues as beachheads for gospel proclamation. The presence of a synagogue (requiring 10 Jewish men) indicated an established Jewish community that would provide access to God-fearing Gentiles already familiar with Scripture.

Historical Context

This occurred during Paul's second missionary journey (~50 AD). The Via Egnatia was Rome's strategic highway built in 146 BC, spanning 500 miles from Dyrrhachium to Byzantium. Amphipolis (33 miles from Philippi) and Apollonia (30 miles further) were smaller cities. Thessalonica, founded in 315 BC and named

after Alexander the Great's half-sister, was the most important city in Macedonia—serving as the provincial capital and a free city with its own government.

Related Passages

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

James 2:17 — Faith and works

Hebrews 11:1 — Definition of faith

Study Questions

1. How does God's sovereignty in directing ministry (bypassing some cities for others) challenge your assumptions about "successful" evangelism?
2. What can we learn from Paul's strategic focus on major population centers with established Jewish communities rather than attempting to reach every town?

Interlinear Text

Διοδεύσαντες	δὲ	τὴν	Ἀμφίπολιν	καὶ	Ἀπολλωνίαν
when they had passed through	Now	G3588	Amphipolis	and	Apollonia
G1353	G1161		G295	G2532	G624

ἦλθον	εἰς	Θεσσαλονίκην	ὅπου	ἦν	ἡ	συναγωγή	τῶν
they came	to	Thessalonica	where	was	G3588	a synagogue	G3588
G2064	G1519	G2332	G3699	G2258		G4864	

Ἰουδαίων
of the Jews
G2453

Additional Cross-References

Philippians 4:16 (Parallel theme): For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity.

1 Thessalonians 1:1 (Parallel theme): Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God the Father and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Acts 20:4 (Parallel theme): And there accompanied him into Asia Sopater of Berea; and of the Thessalonians, Aristarchus and Secundus; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timotheus; and of Asia, Tychicus and Trophimus.

2 Thessalonians 1:1 (Parallel theme): Paul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ:

2 Timothy 4:10 (Parallel theme): For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

Acts 17:13 (Parallel theme): But when the Jews of Thessalonica had knowledge that the word of God was preached of Paul at Berea, they came thither also, and stirred up the people.

Acts 27:2 (Parallel theme): And entering into a ship of Adramyttium, we launched, meaning to sail by the coasts of Asia; one Aristarchus, a Macedonian of Thessalonica, being with us.

Acts 17:11 (Parallel theme): These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.