

There is Another King
Acts 17:1-9

May 24, 2020



Read the passage.

There are three things I want to show you from this passage.

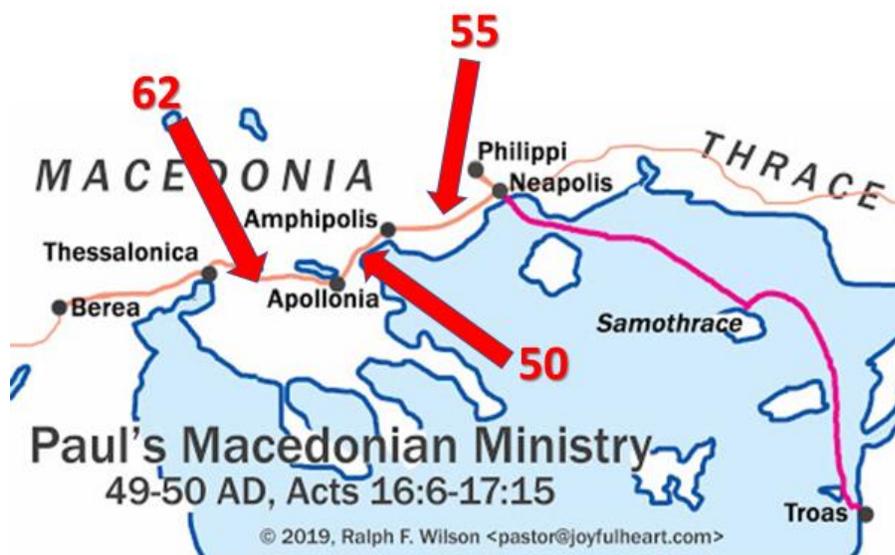
The coffee question spoke to the first emphasis.

Let me add the second and the third emphasis for you and then we will work our way through the passage.

- The first is that the gospel of Jesus is the passion of his followers; it is what motivates our lives; it is what keeps us going day after day.
- The second is that the gospel makes sense of life – it explains who we are and what God has done to rescue us and why we matter to him.
- The third is that the gospel is radical and revolutionary. Whoever believes in Jesus has their life turned right side up and then joins Jesus in helping the kingdom of God infiltrate this world and transform it one life at a time.

Read v.1a.

It sounds as though this was... a pleasant day's stroll.



But it was actually a journey of 167 kms - fifty-five kms from Philippi to Amphipolis, fifty kms to Apollonia, and another sixty-two kms to Thessalonica.



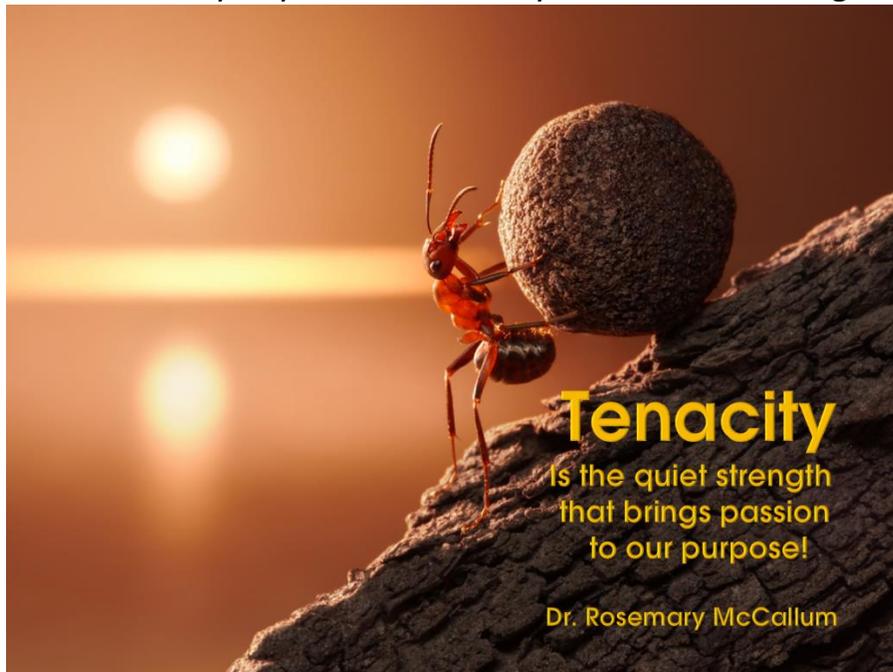
The road Paul and Silas travelled on was a military highway, which meant it had a good surface and good grades.

That said, I need to impress upon you that Paul and Silas set out to walk this distance... the day after.... being severely beaten.

What motivated them to keep going as they did?

Why didn't they cut their mission trip short and go home?

Why didn't they at the very least find an Air BNB along the coast and take however many days were necessary to recover before going on to Thessalonica?



The tenacity of Paul and Silas and team can only be explained and understood by the fact that they had encountered the living Jesus Christ and been saved from their sin and empty way of life...through faith in him.

While in Philippi they had... yet again... seen first-hand... the power of the gospel to save.

This is why they pressed on to Thessalonica – Jesus had told them to go into the world and out of love for him they went.

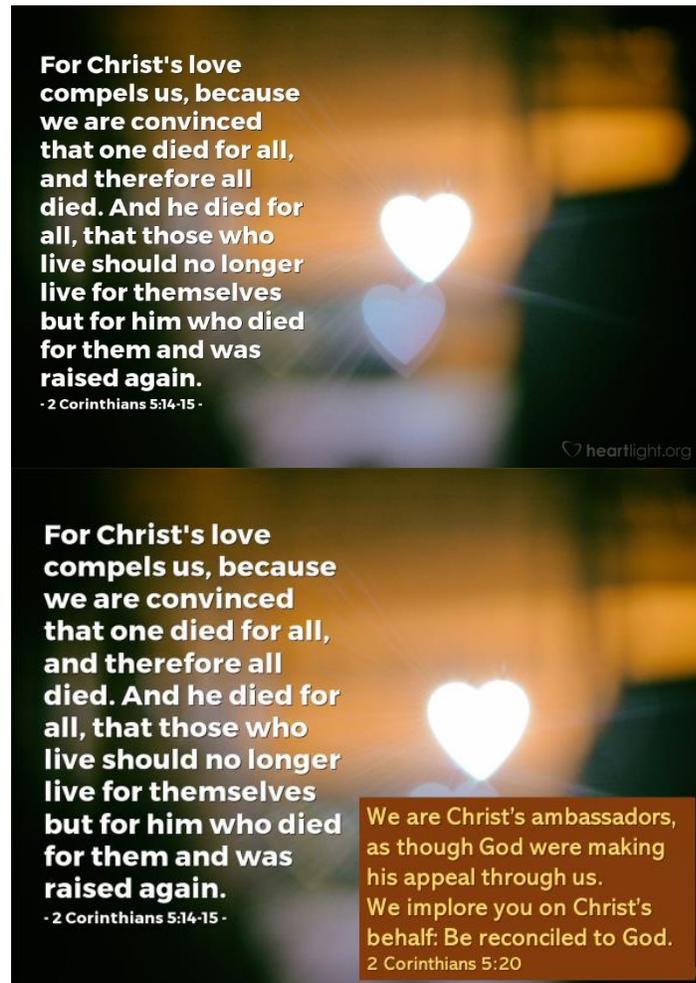
I realize some of you may think... “I could never do what they did.”

And yet... if you have kids, you have been motivated by love for them to make great sacrifices – you’ve gone without sleep; you’ve cared for them while sick; you’ve gone without...in order to provide for them.

The love that motivates you to parent your kids, is a similar love to that which motivated Paul and Silas.

They didn't go into the world because they felt obligated; they went as a response of love for Jesus.

Listen to what Paul wrote to the church at Corinth:



Compelled by the love of Christ Paul and Silas went to city after city.

They considered themselves to be ambassadors for Christ.

They were absolutely convinced that Jesus had died in the place of humanity – for us all...and that Jesus wanted the world to know that he was the way, the truth and the life.

They believed with all of their heart that through faith in Jesus one can be forgiven of their sin and be reconciled to God.

This was why they gladly spent their lives... to spread the news that in and through Jesus... God had provided the cure for sin.

What do we know about Thessalonica?



bible.org says: Thessalonica was originally named Therma because of the many hot springs in the surrounding area.

In 315 B.C. it was renamed Thessalonica to honor the half sister of Alexander the Great.

The city was conquered by Rome in 168 BC and was made the capitol of the province of Macedonia.

When Paul and team came to the city, it had a population of 200,000 consisting mostly of Greeks though there was a significant Roman and Jewish minority.

Thessalonica was strategically located...



...along the Egnation Road, a military highway connecting Rome with the east.

It also had a sheltered harbor, which was made into a naval station and equipped with docks by the Romans.

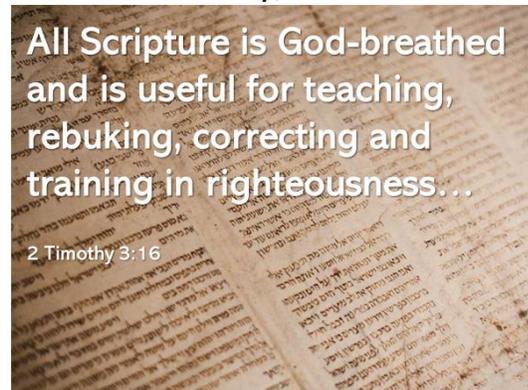
As a free city, Thessalonica enjoyed the autonomy of self-government in all its internal affairs. <https://bible.org/seriespage/1-birth-and-growth-church>

Read v.2-3a.

**“Paul reasoned with them
from the Scriptures...”**

The word reason, comes from the Greek word “dialegomai” – which means to think, to ponder, to discuss.

Paul reasoned with them... from the OT Scriptures, which he believed, as he later wrote to Timothy, were....



...“God-breathed.... and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness...” 2 Timothy 3:16

The goal of Paul’s reasoning... was to help his listeners... engage with God... through his word.

This was Paul’s practice...it was what he did everywhere he went.

Acts 17:17: So [Paul] **reasoned** in the **synagogue** with both Jews and God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the **marketplace** day by day with those who happened to be there.

Acts 18:4: Every Sabbath [Paul] **reasoned** in the **synagogue**, **trying to persuade** Jews and Greeks.

Acts 18:19: [Paul] himself went into the **synagogue** and **reasoned with** the Jews.

Acts 19:8-9: Paul entered the **synagogue** and **spoke boldly** there for three months, **arguing persuasively** about the kingdom of God. But some of them became obstinate; they refused to believe and publicly maligned the Way.

So Paul left them. He took the disciples with him and **had discussions** in the **lecture hall** of Tyrannus.

What did Paul do as he ...reasoned?
Look again at **v.3a**

“Paul reasoned with them from the Scriptures... explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead.

The Greek verb for explain is “dianoigo” which literally means “to open.”

The Greek verb for prove is “paratitheimi” which literally means “to place before.” This is what Paul did for three weeks in that local synagogue. He placed before his listeners the evidence and the logic of the OT Scriptures that had foretold the Messiah’s suffering, death and resurrection.

https://www.colonialkc.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Acts_World-Changers.pdf

Paul essentially did what Jesus himself had done in Luke 24, on the day he rose from the dead, when he journeyed with two disciples on the road to Emmaus.

Luke 24:25-27

[Jesus] said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, **he explained to them** what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

When Jesus left them, those two disciples described to one another what had happened in them as Jesus spoke with them.

They asked each other,
“Were not our hearts burning within us
while he talked with us on the road and
opened the Scriptures to us?”

Luke 24:32

This is the impact upon a human heart when a person hears passages of God’s word put together and is shown and enabled to see reality through the eyes of God... and not through the filter of a spiritually dead soul.

The story of the entire OT is the story of God’s Messiah, the Christ. It is a story, in the words of Tom Wright, whose main themes are...

- suffering and vindication,
- disaster and reversal,
- death and resurrection. p.76

Both Jesus and Paul... opened and proved the Scriptures... helping their listeners to hear and to see what had always been there....and in this way to have their hearts set on fire!

Dr. Luke, both in his gospel and in the book of Acts doesn’t mention the specific OT passages Jesus and Paul used. Don’t you wish he had??

But blueletterbible.org has put together a list of OT Scriptures which speak of the suffering of the Christ.

Their list is not exhaustive, but it is sufficiently substantive to demonstrate that the suffering of the Christ, as Tom Wright says, was a central, and not an obscure theme, and that this theme had been tragically overlooked by many when Jesus lived on the earth.

I say tragically, because this was a key reason why some many Jewish people didn't recognize Jesus.

The OT Scriptures had foretold:

The Christ would be bruised.



The Christ would be sacrificed like a lamb.



The blood of the Christ would make atonement for our lives - see Leviticus 17:11.



All of the OT sacrifices were a foreshadowing of the Christ's once and for all sacrifice.

The Christ would be rejected by his people.

In Psalms 118:22
the Christ is
described as
the Stone
which became
the Cornerstone
which the builders
rejected.



The Christ would be betrayed – see Zechariah 11:13



The Christ would suffer...



Psalm 22

he would be poured out like water –
v.14a, his bones would be out of joint – v.14b, his hands and feet would be
pierced – v.16b, lots would be cast for his clothing – v.18.



he would offer his back to those who beat him; his cheeks to those who pulled out his beard, his face to those who mocked and spit upon him.



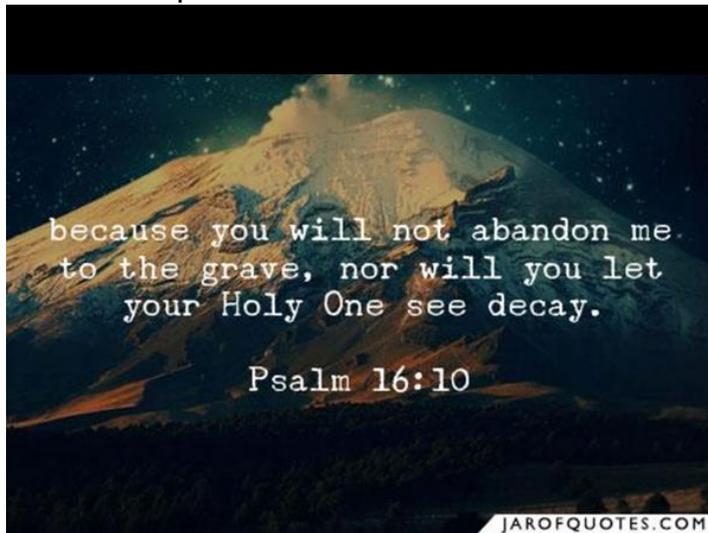
his appearance would be disfigured beyond that of any human being and his form marred beyond human likeness.



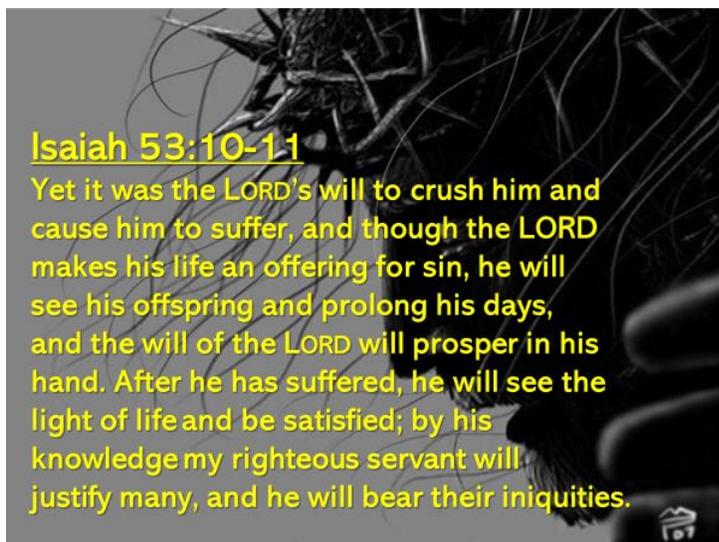
he would be pierced, crushed, wounded, oppressed and afflicted for our sin.

https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/smith_chuck/SermonNotes_Luk/Luk_115.cfm

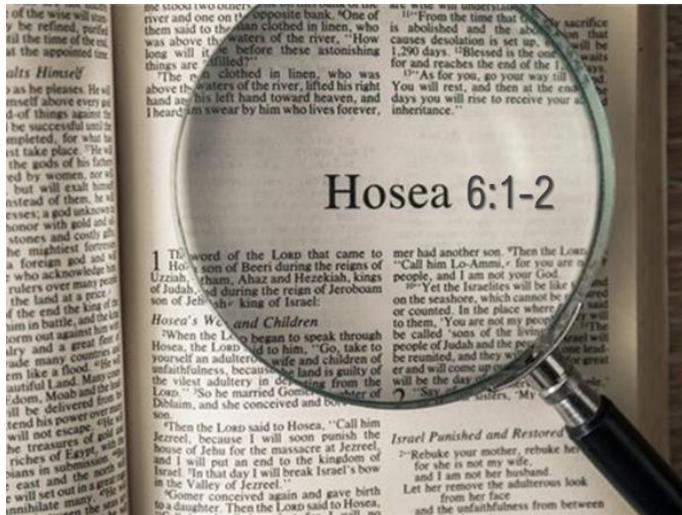
The OT Scriptures had also foretold that the Christ would rise from the dead.



“Your holy one” is a unique Messianic title that never was used to describe David.



It was the will of Yahweh that his Messiah suffer and die (Ps 22:12–21), and be raised to life (Ps 16:10).



The prophet Hosea alluded to this theme of three days after which Yahweh would heal, bind up, revive and restore, in order that the individual being spoken of in these verses...might live in his presence.



The prophet Jonah, who lived in the belly of a large fish for three days and nights was also a signpost for the resurrection of the Christ.

Read v.3b.

Having reasoned, by explaining and proving that the message of the OT Scriptures was that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead, Paul then boldly announced this Jesus of whom I have been speaking...he is the Christ!!!

Can you see the sparkle in Paul's eyes and hear the excitement in his voice?

Only in Christianity does one encounter the Creator God who willingly and completely paid the incalculable cost to reach down to us in order to save.

Only in Christianity do we encounter the God who is with us!

The salvation of Jesus is not about what we must do, but what he has done for us.
His salvation is not something we earn or purchase.
God gives... his righteousness... to all who believe in and receive Jesus.

This is where the gospel of Jesus is truly unique.
This is where the news of the gospel turns humanity's world upside down.



On the one hand the gospel is bad news.
It forces a person to confront not only their sin, but its seriousness.
It tells one they cannot save themselves.
And in this regards it offends human pride.

But on the other hand, the gospel is the most glorious news ever announced.
What none of us can do for ourselves, God did for us in Jesus.
What none of us can earn, God gives to us in Jesus.
What we've ruined, God restores through Jesus.
And this is the good news of great joy.

Read v.4.

The word persuaded is the Greek word peitho – it means persuaded in the sense of believed.

Some of the Jews... believed.
A large number of the God-fearing Greeks... believed.
Many prominent women... believed.

They believed Jesus was the Christ.

Embedded in Paul's reasoning from the OT Scriptures was a non-negotiable, inescapable reality.
When God raised Jesus from the dead, he vindicated him...and declared him to be king of heaven and earth.

This truth of who Jesus is was not hidden or obscured by Paul.

Read v.5-9.

Why would the spokesperson for the crowd describe the gospel as causing trouble all over the world?

Because... Caesar claimed pre-eminence in the lives of his citizens.
But there is another King – and his name is Jesus.
And he is LORD, not Caesar.

In our day and time we claim we are our own authority.
We assert that the truth is what we say it is.
We look for answers within ourselves.
We are comfortable being morally schizophrenic.
But there is another King – and his name is Jesus.
And he is LORD, not you... not me.

Jesus, who in Paul's day was a rival to Caesar ... is a rival to us.
How many of us, like the citizens of Thessalonica, resisted, or still are resisting... and fought, or still are fighting against him?

Even this speaks to the seriousness of sin that has corrupted the human heart and nature; that we would fear and loathe the good God who created us and did everything to save us in the person of Jesus.

When Jesus rose from the dead, the age of grace began.
And he offers amnesty to all who come to him.

The story of what happened in Thessalonica was not resolved.
And so, in that regard, we live with a sense of incompleteness or unsettledness.
The kingdom of God is advancing as it is resisted.
This is how it will be in this in-between time.

His command to go into all the world was like a divine search warrant that gave his followers authority to break into all other cultures of the world, and announce the good news that through repentance and faith in Jesus there is a way home to God.

And

The gospel is not just a belief applicable to some aspects of personal life, and separated for the most part ... from public life.

As the King of heaven and earth, Jesus claims authority over every fact of life.

Home.

Marriage.

Parenting

Neighborhood.

School.

Workplace.

Civic engagements.

Recreational activities.

Etc., Etc., Etc.

As the King, Jesus will lead his followers into hard places and to difficult people...in order to bring salvation to men and women held captive in their sin. Additionally, King Jesus leads his people to be engaged in the work of justice and mercy because the things that happens in this world matters to him.

This is what Jesus has always done.

Who cared for the sick in the great plagues of the past?

Followers of Jesus!

Who established hospitals and began schools?

Followers of Jesus!

Who founded universities?

Followers of Jesus!

Who led the way in science research?

Followers of Jesus!

Who advocated for the abolishment of slavery?

Followers of Jesus!

Who sparked prison reform?

Followers of Jesus!

Who establish the hospice movement?

Followers of Jesus!

Who argued and sponsored bills for women's right?

Followers of Jesus!

It is not about King Jesus imposing an ethic on those who are not his followers. But he does motivate his followers to be motivated by what motivated him as evidenced by the prayer he taught his disciples – may your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

The passion of Jesus is that the will of his Father be realized on this earth.

Do you know why?

Because the will of the Father is life-giving and good.

This is why the people of Jesus are led by him to work hard to bring life and goodness into all aspects of human life and culture.

That said, this passage teaches that as we do so, there will those who oppose, like the Jewish leaders, the mob and the city officials of Thessalonica... because their pride or their financial, political or personal interests feel threatened.

Jesus unseats all other authorities.

He will be LORD in all things.

holding to a God-honoring business ethic when millions of dollars are on the line, defending a biblical worldview as a viable option in our educational curriculum...it ain't easy...it's hard, and the whole world will think you are flying upside down when you follow Jesus into those places and do what He commands.

racial reconciliation, policy change, economic development for impoverished people groups, liberation for those enslaved in human trafficking, provision for children stuck in the foster care system, honest and ethical business practices; etc.

3) The witness, message, and lifestyle of Christians SHOULD look a bit upside down to our prevailing culture. Our lifestyles and choices should cause people to scratch their heads and wonder because we submit to the authority of Christ and not the popular vote. Jesu

4) Like Jason and his friends, the people we influence for Christ need to be prepared for the spiritual and social resistance that will likely come knocking due to their Christian lifestyle and convictions. Please do not fail to instruct your children or those you “raise” in the faith regarding this reality. For far too long Christianity has been presented simply as the medicine that heals and the food that nourishes...and that is true, we find both healing and nourishment in Christ. But don’t leave out the hard stuff...tell the truth...the road to life is narrow and hard according to Christ...it’s not easy. Following Jesus into hard places is part of the deal. Following Jesus into racial reconciliation, policy change, economic development for impoverished people groups, liberation of those enslaved in human trafficking,