

“PROBLEMS ALL DAY LONG”

Acts 17:1-9

Pastor Keith E. Gephart

INTRODUCTION

Many a believer has become discouraged and has given up serving God with far fewer problems than we see Paul facing. Everywhere he and his companions go they face hardships and persecutions. Yet, the “Gospel triumphs” make all of the trouble they experience in their travels well worthwhile!

If our focus is on temporal success and well-being, we will not be able to persevere; but if our focus is upon Him who is eternal and Him who gives His faithful servants eternal rewards when we enter His presence, then we can endure any suffering—however intense or severe.

You must serve God with your life and not allow Satan to discourage you.

Paul contends that his actual opponent is *Satan himself* (I Thes. 2:18).

What kept Paul going through all of this trouble? The **love of His God**, his **glorious salvation in Christ**, and the **glorious rewards in the fruit of his labors in God’s peoples**: “For who is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? **For you are our glory and joy**” (I Thes. 2:19-20). What kept Paul going will also keep you going!

- I. TRAVEL IN THE LORD’S WORK (17:1)
 - A. Amphipolis—capital of that region of Macedonia
 - B. Apollonia
 - C. Thessalonica

*Notice Paul’s reason for stopping to minister here was not to vacation or to do business, **BUT TO PREACH THE GOSPEL AND START A CHURCH.***
- II. TRIUMPH IN THE LORD’S WORK (Gospel Ministry) (17:2-4)
 - A. Ministering in the Synagogue for three weeks.
 1. He _____ with them from the Scriptures (2)
 2. He opened and _____ the Scriptures (3a)
 3. He placed _____ before them from parallel passages and from the contemporary fulfillment in the life and ministry of Jesus (3a)
 - Christ had to _____ (cf. Is. 53).
 - Christ had to _____ from the dead.
 4. His final emphasis was “**This _____ whom I preach unto you is _____**” (3).
 - B. Leading people to a saving knowledge of Christ (4)
 1. Persuasion of some of the Jews
 - They were **persuaded** by the Spirit and by the preachers.
 2. **Joining with** Paul and Silas.
 3. A large number of the “God-fearing Greeks”—proselytes of the gate.

4. A number of the leading women—prominent, influential, and wealthy (likely among the God-fearers also)

Not everyone was happy at the success of the gospel—some were extremely **jealous** due to several factors:

- Gentiles were being saved and not being required to become Jewish.
- Their followers were being “pillaged” by Paul—Jews and God-fearing Gentiles.
- Many of these converts to Christianity had money and influence.

III. TROUBLE IN THE LORD’S WORK (5-9)

Since the Jewish leaders were relatively small in number compared with the overall population, they needed help from the populace. But who would they get?

A. Stirring of a riot (5)

1. Using “the rabble” of the marketplace—no good and worthless and even wicked men who were loafers, “park bench bums”, loafers and gangsters, men of no account with nothing better to do than to stir up trouble.
2. Formed a “mob”
3. Set the city in an uproar (this is Philippi all over again).

B. Attacking the headquarters of the Church—the “house of Jason.” (5)

- They were seeking the “ringleaders” of the sect—Paul and Silas (“them”).
- They were intending to “bring them out to the *Demos*—the public assembly—which was the final court of arbitration in a **free city** like Thessalonica.

C. Dragging Jason and other believers to the Agora—marketplace and place for justice where the politarchs, political authorities of a free Macedonian city, would be found.

Note the significance of Luke’s use of “politarchs” here—nowhere else in Greek literature!

Not a sign of His error or ignorance, but of his extreme accuracy.

D. Making their accusations

1. “These that have turned the world upside down have come here also.” *Note the good communication between Jews all around the empire—they knew about Paul’s work and reputation.*

Would that we would have this kind of reputation today.

2. “Jason has welcomed them.”
3. “These act contrary to the decrees of Caesar.”
4. They regard a **rival emperor**: “There is another king, Jesus.”

E. Stirring up the crowd and the authorities (8)

F. Receiving a pledge—**security**—evidently to expel Paul and Silas from the city

CONCLUSION

Kicked out of town again! Why continue this work? It always seems to turn out bad.

Because, **they were “turning the world upside down” and the Gospel was going forward.**

Don’t we have the same important cause today?

Why be discouraged at **TROUBLE**? We have **TRIUMPH** in the Lord’s work!

You must serve God with your life and not allow Satan to discourage you.