

17:1 Thessalonica, Where There Was a Synagogue

Large Cities Sources of Information.

Chrysostom: Again they pass through the small towns and hurry to the biggest, since the word was to flow to nearby cities as from a source. *Catena on the Acts of the Apostles* 17.1.1

Paul's Affection for Israel Not Forgotten.

Chrysostom: "And as was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue of the Jews." Although he had said, "We turn to the Gentiles,"² he did not abandon these people, for great was his desire toward them. Listen to what he says, "Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved,"³ and, "I wished myself accursed from Christ for my brothers."⁴ He did this because of the promise and the glory of God and because he did not wish to offend the Gentiles. *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles* 37.5

17:2 Arguing from the Scriptures

Refraining from Miracles.

Chrysostom: "For three weeks," it says, "he argued with them from the Scriptures." That is, when they were not at work. For this is what Christ, too, did; he often made his argument from the Scriptures and not by miracles. For his listeners were hostile and accused him of being a deceiving sorcerer. For it is natural for him who tries to persuade people by miracles alone to be suspected, but one who persuades by the Scriptures does not arouse this suspicion. Indeed, we often see Paul persuading people by his teaching. In Antioch, for example, "the whole city gathered together"⁶ to hear his teaching. This is something so great: it is not a small but an exceedingly great miracle. *Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles* 37.7

17:3 Christ Suffered and Rose from the Dead

17:7 Acting Against the Decrees of Caesar

A King Unseen.

Ammonius: In the same manner, their fathers accused Jesus by saying that he called himself king. The former, however, even though they had a kind of charge that was, on the surface, likely to deceive because the one charged was living, how could these latter hide their lying when they were saying that they, the apostles, were proclaiming Jesus a king, who, according to these accusers, was dead? That is, unless he was alive but was not visible. Concerning such a one, the kings of the earth never had need to fear, unless they should see him when entirely visible. But, as it seems from their proclamation of the truth, they knew that even though he was not visible, he was still truly king, and of his kingdom there shall be no end. Catena on the Acts of the Apostles 17.8.4

17:10 Paul and Silas Sent Away by Night

God Prevails Without Signs.

Chrysostom: Why didn't they stay? Why didn't they perform miracles? For if he stayed a long time where he was stoned (i.e., at Lystra), all the more could he have stayed here. What was the reason then? Because God did not always want them to perform miracles. For it is no less a miracle for them, persecuted as they are, to prevail without performing miracles. Therefore, just as now he prevails without miracles, often then he wished to prevail in the same way. And so the apostles did not chase after miracles either, as he himself says, "We preach Christ crucified." ² To those who seek miracles, to those who seek wisdom, we offer this, ³ which is not able to persuade even with miracles, and we persuade them. This is a great miracle. Homilies on the Acts of the Apostles 37.4

17:12 Many People Believed

Faith Seeking Understanding.

Ammonius: They did not investigate like skeptical people, because they had already believed, but like people who were unaware of the prophets' ancient doctrine. Or rather, they believed more because, after examining the Scriptures, they saw that the circumstances of the incarnation of the Lord agreed with the words of the ancient prophets. Catena on the Acts of the Apostles 17.12–13.5