**The Book of Acts is a history of the birth and growth of the early church. From its beginning in the city of Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, the church grew rapidly throughout Judea, into neighboring Samaria and onward to northern Africa and the rest of the Middle East. All of these areas had a significant Jewish population, and at first, these were the people that came to believe in Jesus. Soon, many Gentiles (non-Jews; also called Grecians) came into the church, starting with the conversion of the Roman centurion Cornelius and his family (Acts Chapter 10) and continuing in the church of Antioch (Acts 11:19-26).**

**At this time, the center of outreach activity shifted to the church in Antioch. From here, the Holy Spirit sent out the first missionaries – Barnabas and Saul (later called Paul). Three “missionary journeys” from this church are described in the Book of Acts, and the apostle Paul is in all of them. The church in the city of Thessalonica was planted on Paul’s second missionary journey.**

**Thessalonica (now called Thessaloniki) is in Greece. It is both a major sea and land trade hub, like Corinth. Even today, it is a large, wealthy city, as it was in Paul’s day. It was founded in 315 BC by Cassander of Macedon and named after his wife Thessalonike, who was the sister of Alexander the Great. Besides trade, farming and the mining of precious metals (gold and silver) also contributed to the wealth of the city.**

**After starting the church in Philippi, Paul and Silas went on to Thessalonica. Luke’s account of what happened there is found in Acts 17:1-10. Please read this passage and answer the following questions.**

1. **What did Paul and Silas find when they got to Thessalonica? (v.1) Answer: They found “a of the “.**
2. **How long did Paul “reason” with the Jews of Thessalonica, and what did he use? (v.2)**
3. **What was Paul “opening and alleging” (“explaining and proving” – NIV) from the Scriptures? (v. 3) Answer: Paul taught that Christ (Messiah) must and then from the dead, and that is Christ. (See also Luke 24:13-27, 44-48)**
4. **What was the FIRST response to Paul’s preaching of the Gospel? Describe the people who responded. (v. 4)**
5. **What was the SECOND response to the preaching of the Gospel in the synagogue of Thessalonica? Who started it and WHY? (v. 5)**
6. **Who did the crowd “arrest” when they couldn’t find Paul and Silas? (v. 5)**
7. **How did they describe Paul and Silas to the “rulers of the city”? (v.6 KJV) Answer: They described them as “These that have turned the world “.**
8. **What did this mob accuse Paul and Silas of doing? (v. 7) Answer: they accused them of “saying that there is another , one .”**
9. **How did the people and the rulers of the city respond to this accusation? (v. 8)**
10. **What did Jason and his friends have to do in order to be released by the rulers? (v.9; see the NIV translation for this answer)**
11. **What did the saints in Thessalonica do with Paul and Silas? (v. 10) Answer: They sent them by to .**

**Background to the Letters of Paul to the church in Thessalonica**

**We are not sure of how long Paul stayed in Thessalonica. However, because of the trouble stirred up by those who had rejected the Gospel, Paul and Silas had to leave the young church before he was ready to go. At some later time, Paul had sent Timothy back to Thessalonica. When Timothy returned, he made Paul aware of some unanswered questions in the church. Being prevented from going in person to address them, Paul wrote these letters.**

**It is generally accepted that I Thessalonians is the first of the recorded letters of Paul to the churches, being written about 50 AD, and that II Thessalonians came soon after. A major theme of these letters is the return of Jesus Christ. Paul instructs the church to be patient and stay focused on the important truths of the Gospel as they relate to everyday Christian living. Also, Paul helped them understand that there are specific future events that will occur before the Lord’s return that should help us to be prepared.**

**Another concern of the Thessalonian church was the fate of believers who had died, either from natural causes, accidents, or persecution. Would their deaths keep them from meeting the Lord when He returns? Paul’s answer has become perhaps the most widely-quoted passage of Scripture to those who are grieving – becoming a source of spiritual comfort and hope for nearly two thousand years.**

**Acts 20:4 identifies two members of the church of Thessalonica who became part of Paul’s missionary group: Aristarchus and Secundus. Aristarchus later accompanied Paul when he was sent to Rome (Acts 27:2) and is mentioned as a “fellowprisoner” when Paul writes the letter to the Colossians (4:10) and as a “fellowlaborer” in his letter to Philemon (1:24).**