



Light Magazine

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" Psalm 119:105

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Bible Truths

The Politarchs of Thessalonica

ON ONE OF their missionary journeys, Paul and Silas came to Thessalonica in Macedonia. (Part of Northern Greece) We read in the book of Acts that '*As his custom was, Paul went into the synagogue, and on three Sabbath days he reasoned with them from the Scriptures.*' [Acts 17.2 NIV] His preaching, with God's blessing, was so successful that '*Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of God-fearing Greeks and not a few prominent women.*' [Acts 17.4 NIV]

However the Jews of the city were not happy about this and stirred up a mob that attacked the house of Jason while looking for Paul and Silas. When they failed to find them they dragged Jason and other followers of Christ before the '*city officials.*' [Acts 17.6 NIV] The interesting thing here is that the Greek word used for '*city officials*' is '*politarchs*', which means rulers of a city. It is not found anywhere else in the Greek literature that survives. Therefore we have this Greek word '*politarch*' used to describe these '*City Officials*' which is unique to the Biblical record.

The marble inscription engraved with the names of the 'politarchs'



The remarkable fact is that in 1835 an inscription was found with this very word on it. It was built into a Roman arch that spanned the Egnatian Way on the West side of Thessalonica. The arch was destroyed in 1867 but the block of marble with the inscription on it was saved and is now in the British Museum. The inscription shows that in Paul's time Thessalonica was indeed governed by rulers called '*politarchs*', and the names of six of these '*city rulers*' are shown on this stone.

The use of this word by Luke, the writer of The Acts of the Apostles, was unique in referring to the city rulers in the area of Macedonia at that time. For those who love the Bible, the research of the



archaeologist and other scholars, has resulted in another amazing confirmation of the historical accuracy of God's Word.

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